



VETERANS ARE FAILED BY FRANCE

Report by Janet Lee

A WOMAN has launched a campaign for Normandy veterans to receive their medals as soon as possible. Yvonne Russon, aged 50, fears her father-in-law Geoffrey Russon will not live to see his medal.

Black Country war veteran Geoffrey, who was 92 on Tuesday, says he feels 'very despondent'.

The French government announced last summer that it would recognise all surviving D Day veterans with the country's highest honour, the Legion D'Honneur.

Geoffrey, who lives in Cradley Heath, applied for his medal shortly after the announcement was made in 2014. But his daughter-in-law said Veterans have been told they will have to wait until next year. "Good job he and others like him didn't ask the French to wait another year before they landed on the beaches at Normandy," said Yvonne, who lives in Stafford.

"There are not many D-Day Veterans alive. He is my hero.

"He has never asked for anything. He has worked all his life and is a very proud man. The wait for recognition is not acceptable."

She is incensed that at a time when there is so much media coverage of the D-Day anniversary, veterans are dying before they receive the medal that honours their bravery in France.

Geoffrey, who belongs to the Birmingham branch of the Normandy Veterans, said: "Membership of our branch was in excess of 150. Now I am one of six veterans."

Housebound

Geoffrey, who is housebound and was unable to make the trip to Normandy for recent commemorations, watched the events on TV.

"I had a letter from the Ministry of Defence saying my application had been forwarded to the French government," he said.

"I have no idea why it's taking so long. "Some will not have this medal. It's wrong. They were quick enough to get us over there."

Geoffrey, who was a driver in the Royal Army Service Corps, believes the applications, which also come from veterans across the world, including America and Canada. Yvonne has emailed the French Embassy and other organisations which she thinks will be able to help speed up the process.

Stafford MP Jeremy Lefroy said he would be prepared to take up the case on Yvonne's behalf.

Yvonne is asking people to email the French Embassy asking them 'to hasten their decision' on the medals.

Leave my father to rest in peace



Diana Woodhouse, holding her father's paratrooper's beret, at the crematorium rose garden site where his ashes were placed

Memorials on move

A WOMAN has criticised a decision to remove rose beds where she spread her father's ashes from a crematorium in the Black Country.

Sandwell Council is phasing out the memorials from Rowley Regis Crematorium as part of plans to overhaul the site but Diana Woodhouse is furious over the decision.

She says the ashes of her father, James Workman, who fought in the Second World War, cannot be moved as they were sprinkled directly into the soil beneath the rose beds 10 years ago.

Mr Workman lived in Tividale and died in 2005 at the age of 80. His 56-year-old daughter, of Shinwell Crescent, Tividale, said if she had known there was a possibility

the bushes would be moved, she would not have agreed for her father's ashes to be placed there.

Mrs Woodhouse said: "It is absolutely ridiculous. My dad was a paratrooper and fought for this country. He has been there for 10 years, his ashes are in the soil"

The bushes are due to be removed once family leases on them have expired. Mrs Woodhouse's lease is up at the end of this month. Families affected will be offered plaques in a new remembrance garden.

Sandwell Council leader Darren Cooper said: "I assure everyone that we will be providing alternative memorial options. We know how important memorials are for families."

POLICE

Gunshots are fired at house from car

POLICE have launched an investigation after gunshots were fired at a house from a car in Oldbury.

Wallace Road was sealed off on Tuesday morning as forensic experts searched the area. Neighbours heard a loud bang at around 11.30pm on Monday. A grey Vauxhall Astra was seen speeding away from the area around the time of the incident.

West Midlands Police spokeswoman Sarah Buxton said: "Police were called to Wallace Road in Oldbury following a report a shot was fired at a house."

Contact police on 101.

IMPROVEMENTS

Work on new park paths completed

A £70,000 project to create a series of new footpaths through a Cradley park has been completed.

The work has been carried out at Homer Hill Park to improve access for its many visitors. The five paths have been made in and around the perimeter of the park and now join up with the existing network of walking routes.

Some of the cash to fund the project came from the sale of the former crematorium lodge in Chase Road, Lower Gornal.

CANAL

Swing bridge bid to link heritage sites

A PLAN for a swing bridge over a canal to link two of Dudley's tourist attractions as part of a £3 million development has been lodged with Dudley Council.

Dudley Canal Trust has submitted plans for the bridge by its Todds End entrance. It would enable visitors from the Black Country Living Museum, to access the ticket office, boats and the planned new heritage centre, The Portal.

Work is due to get under way soon on the two-storey base which will be used to tell thousands of visitors to the site about the Black Country's industrial past with emphasis on its canal heritage.

INSIDE

Lenny looking back to 1970s



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Veteran Geoffrey Russon, 91

Campaign is launched to protect pub

A CAMPAIGN has been launched to protect the Maypole pub in Halesowen. Customers fear its future could be in doubt after it was brought by New River Retail, which has recently purchased other pubs in the region.

In some cases it has applied to build a convenience store on part of the pub car park.

Supporters of the pub in Bassnage Road hope to follow in the footsteps of campaigners who successfully secured 'asset of community value' status for the Haden Cross in Cradley Heath, giving it greater protection from developers, after it was proposed to have a neighbouring store.

A petition has been launched by the newly-formed Friends of the Maypole group. But New River Retail said no firm decisions had been made.

Chairman of Friends of the Maypole Geoff Dixon said: "We are aiming for 200 signatures, petitions will be at the pub."

A spokesman for New River Retail, who acquired the Maypole as part of a portfolio of 202 pubs from Marston's in 2013 said: "We are currently reviewing options for this site."

Homes to get upgrades in £21m project

THOUSANDS of council homes across Sandwell are being revamped as the next phase of a multi-million pound project gets under way.

Sandwell Council will spend £21 million upgrading kitchens and bathrooms, installing new heating, doors, windows and roofs.

Since the programme began in January last year, 2,200 properties have been refurbished at a cost of £16.5m.

Councillor Steve Eling, deputy leader, said the council was committed to improving homes as quickly as it can, as well as building new ones. "The council is very proud of the work we have undertaken to improve the living standards of people across the borough in recent years, despite the problems we face in a difficult economic situation," he said.

Dozens of new council homes will be built in Sandwell as part of a £12.5m scheme to meet the growing demand for properties across the borough. Land earmarked for development includes the former Bolton Court site in Ocker Hill and Tibbington Terrace, both in Tipton; Doulton Road, Rowley Regis; and Kent Close in West Bromwich.



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Snooker club gutted in arson attack



Remains of the snooker club

THIS picture shows the devastating aftermath of a fire which ripped through a Dudley snooker hall at the weekend.

Dudley Snooker & Pool Club, in Stafford Street, has been gutted by the huge blaze which broke out in the early hours of Sunday. The ruined remains will be demolished.

More than 50 firefighters attended and battled the fire for five hours but could not save the building, which is expected to be torn down this week to make the area safe.

The neighbouring businesses Price 2 Beat Bespoke Bedrooms and Kitchens

were also severely damaged by the blaze. No one was injured at any of the premises and investigators are still trying to find the cause.

Traders spoke of their shock at the destruction.

Farad Latif, manager of Dudley Butchers, said: "It was a major social venue for the area. "That building has been here for years. It is quite a historical building compared to some of the new places being built in Dudley. It is a real shame."

Rukhsana Begum, from Food World, which is based less than 20 ft from the

club, said: "My father was driving past at the time because he is a taxi driver and he saw the fire happening.

"I know the owners, they are family friends, and they have only just taken over. They have been running it for the last few months. I feel sorry for them."

The flames ripped through the club completely gutting the inside of the building and destroying the roof. Among the wreckage were blackened snooker tables.

Temporary fencing was placed around the club as a safety precaution in case it collapsed.

Intrepid Sam to cycle across South America

AFTER completing a 4,000-mile row across the Atlantic Ocean, you would be forgiven for thinking cancer survivor Sam Greatrex would be ready to put his feet up for a well deserved rest.

But the 30-year-old adventurer is preparing to push his body to the limit again, this time by cycling 3,000 miles across South America.

Fresh from smashing three world records on the way to completing the row faster than anyone else in history, it will be on the Atlantic coast where his next challenge begins.

Sam, from Halesowen, will be attempting to cross the continent from east to west, ending at the Pacific Ocean – with just the small matter of the Amazon rainforest, the Andes mountains and hundreds of miles of dirt roads to navigate inbetween.

He will get in the saddle in Guyana and is aiming to complete the task in Peru eight weeks later. Sam will be all alone on his trip, with a satellite phone to use in the event of an emergency.

Challenge

This cycling adventure is the next leg of the marathon Lap the World challenge, by which Sam, from Manor Way, is hoping to raise a quarter of a million pounds for Macmillan Cancer Support.

The charity is a personal cause for the intrepid fundraiser who, at the age of 10 was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin lymphoma. He underwent successful chemotherapy at Birmingham Children's Hospital and was helped through treatment and recovery by Macmillan nurse Moira Bradwell. Sam said she had been 'an inspiration' and had regularly seen him at check-ups for 17 years.

It is an exhausting challenge ahead of Sam, but it's not the altitude or the creatures of the rainforest that are his main concern. At certain points on his trip, Sam will be the only per-



Mapping his way — Sam Greatrex, of Halesowen, is ready for his next major challenge in aid of a cancer charity

son within hundreds of miles and it is that though that bothers him the most.

He said: "I have cycled pretty much that distance across Australia and the hardest thing in Australia was the isolation. I would go for days without speaking to anybody and there were no towns to visit. That will be the case in South America. It's just myself — and all the creepy crawlies."

After beginning in Guyana, Sam will head for Brazil where he will remain for much of the trip. Once he has emerged from the vast Amazon rainforest he will then have to tackle another of Earth's natural wonders, the Andes mountains. As well as having to push his bike uphill he has to contend with thinning air when he is 4,000 metres above sea level.

"There is a lot of climbing involved and it will slow the pace. It will be a challenge I've never experienced before," Sam said. He is aiming to complete 70 miles a day but admits that will be difficult in the mountains. He said: "There will be days when I only cycle 40 miles because the gradient is so large and it is uphill all day. If

the roads are slush it will be slow progress. It won't be Tour de France pace, I'm certain of that."

There is also the risk of altitude sickness. He said: "At 4,000 metres it will really be quite heady altitude, probably the steepest I have ever cycled," he said. "It's a big challenge. The aim is just to be in one piece after 4,000 metres and then enjoy the cycle downhill."

"I am not by any stretch an elite athlete and hopefully I have shown people these types of challenges are attainable."

Town facing protest as traders told to stay open

PROTESTERS planning to march in Dudley against a new mosque have been urged to respect residents' rights to live in harmony.

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson said: "Dudley is a diverse borough, in which people from different backgrounds and cultures get on and work together well.

"In our region we respect the values of each other and the right that we all have to worship freely in whichever way we chose.

"The right to peacefully protest will be protected but we expect everybody who visits the area to respect local people and their right live in harmony."

His comments come as a group calling itself All Football Fans/Firms Against Islamisation (AFFFAI) announced plans to march in the town on June 13.

It will be the third such protest in the town since February, following demonstrations by the English Defence League and Britain First.

Mr Jamieson said: "Dudley is used to seeing protests and the police are used to dealing with these operations in a professional and calm manner."

Traders are concerned that they will lose trade because of another protest, again on a Saturday.

But AFFFAI event host Kevin Smith said traders should open as normal on the day. He added: "If the future of their country means less than two hours of trading then we can clearly see where the problems we face today are coming from."

Shakespeare on at manor house

FANS of the Bard can see two Shakespeare plays when Sandwell's historic Manor House Museum hosts the summer open-air productions.

Theatre company Festival Players will perform Shakespeare's comedy As You Like It on Saturday and return on August 9 with an adaptation of Henry IV parts one and two. Both plays are set against the backdrop of the 13th century Manor House Museum, in Hall Green Road, West Bromwich. Jane Hanney, of Sandwell museums, said: "Visitors to our Manor House productions this year will have a very authentic experience with an all-male cast."

Both plays begin at 5pm and gates open at 4pm. Tickets are available from the Manor House, online at www.thefestivalplayers.co.uk or on the gate.

Boisterous games mean more patrols

YOUTHS have been causing a nuisance by playing football in the street and running over gardens, according to residents in a Halesowen road.

Police say they will be increasing patrols around Fatherless Barn Crescent, in Belle Vale, following complaints.

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New MP is giving his council pay to charities

A NEWLY-ELECTED MP has revealed he intends to hand over to charities almost all of the £10,000 he gets from his other role as a councillor.

Mike Wood, who held Dudley South for the Conservatives at the General Election, is also a councillor representing Pedmore and Stourbridge East.

But the 39-year-old said he would not be standing down as a councillor straight away as he wants to try to avoid a costly by-election taking place in the summer, when turnout is typically very low.

Instead the father-of-two is going to attempt to stay on as a councillor until the local elections next May but will be donating his £9,600 a year council allowances to worthy causes.

He has left himself the option of standing down earlier if he is not able to get to as many council meetings as he hopes to.

Mr Wood, said: "I intend to continue as a Dudley councillor until next May but, from next month, I shall be dividing my Council allowances between local charities.

"Because the Government's majority is so narrow, I probably won't be able to get to as many council meetings as I might have wished and so it may be that I do need to stand down earlier. I will speak to the leader of the council and to other members of the council, and assuming there is no groundswell of public demand, then I will continue until next May's local elections."

Woman, 22, was attacked in alley

TWO men attacked a woman in broad daylight in Dudley town centre.

The 22-year-old was pushed to the ground in an alleyway between Love Lane and High Street. She was then held down by one of the men as the other tried to steal her phone. When a passer-by entered the alley on hearing the woman's screams, the attackers fled empty handed. The attack took place at 9.05am on May 11.

Acting Detective Sergeant Nick Slyn, from Dudley Police, said: "We believe one of the offenders was a black man, wearing tracksuit bottoms and distinctive light or sky blue Nike Air Max trainers. Unfortunately there is no description of the other man."

Call police 101 or call Crimestoppers confidentially on 0800 555 111.

Garden open day to help hospice

A GARDEN open day will raise money for Stourbridge's Mary Stevens Hospice at 20 Waxland Road, Halesowen, from 1pm until 5pm on June 7. Entry is £3 and there will be refreshments, a raffle and plants for sale.

Former chapel could sell for £100k



For sale — Cradley Forge Chapel

A CHAPEL, which closed last year after more than eight decades of service has been put up for sale.

Bidders are being sought to take over the Cradley Forge Methodist Chapel in Quarry Bank, which has an asking price of £100,000.

The premises in Hammer Bank opened in 1924 but closed at Easter last year.

Property firm Rightmove said the building, which is listed as a heritage asset, is in need of a major refurbishment.

The future of the site is uncertain,

with Rightmove saying the building is suitable for a number of uses but is likely to be converted rather than demolished.

Quarry Bank's Councillor David Sparks said it was important the new buyers don't make too many changes to the building.

He said: "This chapel is part of the rich tapestry that makes up the community of the Black Country and I hope that whoever buys it is able to maintain that heritage.

"There have been lots of examples elsewhere in the country where chap-

els have been converted into commercial and community sites that have fitted in with their localities.

"We have to be careful in the Dudley borough and the Black Country that we don't lose our heritage. This chapel is part of the fabric of the community."

The chapel, which includes a main hall, entrance hall, rear hall, kitchen and lobby, played an important role in the community prior to its sudden closure last year, with choirs singing and other events regularly staged at the building.

Jobs are axed at youth centres to save money

MORE than 30 jobs have been axed as part of a shake-up of council youth centres across Dudley.

Dudley Council has cut £200,000 from the youth service budget as part of wider plans for £27 million of savings.

Voluntary groups will be drafted in to help run some of the activities at the borough's seven youth centres.

The council has confirmed 27 youth workers had left through voluntary redundancy and six people were being redeployed to other roles within the authority. The hours covered by the staff equate to six full-time equivalent roles, the council said.

It runs centres at Halesowen, Lye, Wordsley, Gornal, Dudley, Russells Hall and Coseley and activities for young people aged up to 25.

Although they have pledged not to close any centres at this stage, bosses want to reduce the amount of activity sessions run by the council and transfer them to voluntary and community groups.

But they have pledged that there would be no reduction in the amount of activities and services provided.

The youth service runs holiday clubs, sports and information advice and guidance.

Youth workers also help people to access schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

Redeploy

Council leader Pete Lowe said: "The required savings through redundancies have now been made after 5.3 full time equivalent posts left through voluntary redundancy. We are currently looking to redeploy the remaining 0.7 full time equivalent post elsewhere in the authority.

"Meanwhile, in terms of the continued delivery of good quality youth work throughout the borough, we are working with local voluntary organisations to support their capacity to develop universal youth work provision and we continue to deliver targeted early help youth work to more vulnerable young people in the borough."

The council is proposing savings of £22.9m for 2015/16, moving up to £25.3m by 2016/17 and £27.4m by 2017/18.

But the council has warned it faces a deficit of approaching £30m by 2017/18 if additional savings are not found.



First couple — the new Mayor and Mayoress of Dudley, St Thomas's ward councillor Steve Waltho and his wife Jayne, who live in Kingswinford

Charity role for the new mayor

THE new Mayor of Dudley has pledged to support five charities.

Councillor Steve Waltho was sworn into the role in front of colleagues and invited guests on Thursday. The former deputy mayor, 59, who lives in Kingswinford, has been a councillor for 17 years in total.

He picked five organisations to help — The Hope Centre, in Halesowen; The What Centre, in Stourbridge; More Mascots Please, in Brierley Hill; The Georgina Unit at Dudley's Russells Hall Hospital; and the West Midlands branch of Lupus UK, based in Coseley.

Councillor Waltho said: "It is a huge honour and a privilege to be the Mayor of Dudley. The mayoress and I are really looking forward to being ambassadors for the borough. Charity has always been something very close to my heart and I'm really excited about the opportunity the mayoral role gives to raising money for worthy causes."

His wife, Jayne, was named mayoress, while Councillor Mohammed Hanif was sworn in as Deputy Mayor of Dudley.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Zoo's calendar is helping tiger care

SALES of Dudley Zoo's 2015 calendar have raised £700 for a charity which supports endangered tigers in the wild.

The zoo has handed the proceeds over to conservation charity 21st Century Tiger after copies of the calendar flew off the shelves.

The fundraising calendar featured spectacular photographs of some of the zoo's favourite animals captured by keen amateur photographers.

Visitors snapped up the calendar with staff posting packages to Australia, USA and Germany too.

Health service plans revealed

PATIENTS can hear about future plans for NHS services at a public forum on Thursday, June 18.

Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) is holding a two-hour meeting at Brierley Hill Civic Hall from 2.30pm.

Dr Steve Mann, clinical executive at Dudley CCG, said "GPs in Dudley know that the best support for emotional health and happiness needs to be in the right place at the right time and from the right person".

To book a place at the meeting call Clare Hamilton on (01384) 321764.

Medium in charity fundraiser at pub

A DEMONSTRATION of clairvoyance will help raise money for a cancer charity.

The Courthouse pub, in New Street, Dudley, is holding the fundraising evening tonight (Thursday) from 7.30pm. Janet O'Carroll is hosting the night of mediumship with cash going to White House Cancer Support.

Advance tickets are priced at £8 or £10 on the door. There will also be a raffle. Call (01384) 231232 or visit www.support4cancer.org.uk

Students taking their talents to market

STUDENTS will be manning a weekly store at Dudley Market in a bid to boost sales for their gift enterprise.

The students from the town's college are part of the Aspire training scheme giving special needs students hands-on experience. They will take orders from market visitors each Tuesday and then dispatch products from their print works on the campus.

Customers can choose from items including mugs, T-shirts and chopping boards, which can be personalised.

Speeding crackdown

PEOPLE have been complaining about the number of motorists speeding along a road in Halesowen and now police plan a crackdown on speeders. Officers will be conducting speed checks along Rosemary Road, off Hagley Road, in Hayley Green, during the coming weeks.

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THE BEST OF

PETER RHODES

I'M not surprised the Prince of Wales's handshake with Gerry Adams lasted 12 seconds. I once shook hands with Adams and it did go on a bit. He has an excellent dry, warm, firm handshake and his eye-contact, smile, demeanour and body-language all say: "Trust me." I didn't.

FIRST cuckoo of the year (at last) but there's a distinct shortage of baby bunnies in the fields around Chateau Rhodes. The local falconer says it's because the biggest rabbit warren has been taken over by that elusive creature, a polecat. I have only ever seen one alive and a couple dead at the roadside. If you've never seen a polecat, there's some excellent BBC footage of wildlife cameraman and national treasure Simon King filming two at once at http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/life/Europe-an_Polecat#p007xt1g

FROM all the headlines about new Culture Secretary John Whittingdale taking on the BBC, you might assume the future of the TV licence can be measured in days – well, weeks, maybe? Dream on. No change is expected before 2026. Meanwhile, we discover the long-awaited inquiry into alleged child abuse in the Establishment could drag on for eight years. Over the water, the convicted Boston bomber Dzhokhar Tsarnaev's appeal against the death penalty could last 18 years. If you want a process to go on forever, bring on the suits. What we need is a thorough, international inquiry into why things take so long these days. It would require a chairman on a huge salary who, before the inquiry starts, is found to have loads of skeletons in his cupboard and has to be replaced. And lawyers, of course. Lots and lots of lawyers on enormous salaries with a vested interest in never reaching a solution. With care, the worldwide inquiry into why things take so long would last for ever.

RESEARCH by Microsoft suggests that the average attention span of humans is getting shorter. It has fallen from 12 seconds in 2000 to, wow, look at that cloud!

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Anger over noise led to man's brain injuries

A THUG who left a young man with life-changing brain injuries after a row over earlu morning noise in a Halesowen street has been locked up for 18 months.

Trouble flared as Luke Brittain and friends gathered outside one of their homes in Bloomfield Street West, Halesowen, at 5.30am after an evening out.

The noise disturbed a neighbour and her partner Jack

By John Scott

Sutton, who both shouted at the group to keep quiet.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard that the revelers had apologised in an attempt to calm the situation and went inside.

But furious 26-year-old unemployed roofer Sutton was waiting when Mr Brittain left the property soon afterwards, explained Mr David Swinnerton, prosecuting.

Punched

He blocked Mr Brittain's path and punched the victim once in the face, knocking him to the ground.

The prosecutor continued: "There was an audible thud as his head hit the pavement."

Sutton was dragged away by his partner. But Mr Brittain had to receive emergency surgery at hospital after suffering a fractured skull and bleeding to both sides of the brain.

The August 15 attack has left him with restricted hearing and taste, a stammer and unsteadiness on his feet, the court was told.

Miss Amrisha Parathalingham, defending, said Sutton's family had paid £20,000 for private treatment to help him end drug and alcohol abuse that had created mental problems.

He was now providing negative results in tests for substance abuse said the lawyer, adding: "He is making a real effort to change."

Sutton from Siviters Close, Rowley Regis, admitted wounding and was sent to prison.

Judge Helen Hughes told Sutton: "A young man having an enjoyable night out with friends ended up in a neurological unit with life-changing injuries as a result of this unprovoked attack."

"I understand you were upset by people making a noise outside the property in which you were living at the time, but you could not control yourself. I would be failing in my public duty if I did not send you to immediate imprisonment."

Alice's adventures on the canal



Curiouser and curiouser — Alice discovers the canal tunnel

DUDLEY Canal Tunnel are holding an Alice in Wonderland event during half-term.

There are craft activities on the towpath and an underground trail as part of the Wonderland theme, which continues today (Thursday) and tomorrow.

The caverns will be decorated with characters and scenery from Lewis Carroll's famous books of Alice's adventures in Wonderland and through the Looking Glass.

The craft activities, including making tea-cup headwear and bread-and-butterflies, are 50p each and will run from 12pm to 2pm.

Hatter

The Mad Hatter will be in residence at lunchtimes each day entertaining visitors with nonsense poems.

Heritage activities officer at Dudley Canal Trust Trips said: "We're really looking forward to the event. Heading into our tunnels is a bit like going down your very own rabbit hole."

"With craft activities and live character appearances, there is something for every Alice fan to enjoy."

Craft activity places can be booked by calling 0121 557 6265.

Pledge to move 100 staff to new roles

AROUND 100 workers at Sandwell Council face being moved to alternative roles during the next 12 months, as part of the latest round of budget cuts.

There will be no redundancies following a pledge made by bosses. Staff will instead receive training before being redeployed to fill existing vacancies.

Hundreds of workers have been laid off by the council in recent years amid massive cuts in funding from Government. But, in April, council leaders announced a 'jobs promise' and current staff were assured their jobs were safe, despite needing to make savings of £38 million by 2018.

Council leader Darren Cooper this week confirmed around 100 staff were expected to be redeployed by March 2016.

By moving workers to other roles, the authority can save cash by not paying out redundancy moneys.

Bosses also hope the 'jobs promise' will help to improve morale among workers.

Councillor Cooper said: "We have a job promise in place which means employees will be redeployed and retrained into new roles if their job is no longer required. At the moment we anticipate having to redeploy around 100 employees in 2015/16 as a result of reducing budgets."

Around 300 workers were made redundant in 2014/15.

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Nordic walk activity at the Leasowes

PEOPLE can try their hand at Nordic walking for beginners at The Leasowes in Halesowen.

Part of Dudley Council's let's get active outdoors programme, it utilises walking poles in order to give participants a whole body workout.

The moderately paced walk is led by a trained instructor and takes place every Thursday from 6pm to 7pm throughout the summer.

More advanced walkers can also join a faster paced Nordic that runs throughout the year on Monday evenings at 5.30pm.

The sessions are free of charge and poles are provided at no cost but participants are asked to wear suitable clothing and footwear.

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member responsible for health, said: "As part of the let's get health initiative we are encouraging everyone in Dudley borough to take on more physical activity whilst eating a healthy diet."

"The Leasowes Historic Landscape and Nature Reserve is a beautiful environment to exercise in and Nordic walking offers the chance to try out something new with other walkers."

Participants meet at The Leasowes wardens' base off Mucklow Hill and are asked to arrive 15 minutes before each session starts. People of all ages and abilities are welcome to take part.

Helping hand offered for Big Advice Day

DUDLEY Council for Voluntary Service is holding two events in the borough to mark the national Big Advice Day on June 16. A social media surgery is being held with Halas Homes at Coffee Cups, Thornhill Road, Halesowen, from 10am to 12 noon. A drop-in advice session will be held at the Dudley CVS offices in Albion Street, Brierley Hill, from 2pm to 5pm.

Councils use spy powers almost 400 times over past five years

Classy brass at concert in church



Musicians who appeared at St Margaret's Church, Sam Pagett, Lauren Alexandra, Neil Greenway, Jessica Holgate

MUSIC filled a Halesowen church as young performers took to the stage for a concert.

The show featured performances from The Lady and The Sax, fronted by Sam Pagett and Lauren Alexandra.

They were joined at St Margaret's Church in Quarry Lane by Neil Green-

way, a tenor soloist and piano player who appears with trio Tenuto and soprano Jessica Holgate.

Jeanette Greenway, who helped to organise the concert, said it was a great success.

"There was blues, jazz, rock 'n' roll from Lady and the Sax, with solos and

duets from Sam Pagett and Lauren Alexander," she said.

"Neil Greenway did solos including Till I Hear You Sing Once More and Jessica Holgate did Summertime."

The Lady and The Sax are based in Stourport and perform concerts across the country.

COUNCILS in the West Midlands have used controversial spy powers to snoop on residents nearly 400 times in the last five years.

Surveillance powers have been used 388 times, to catch fly-tippers, graffiti vandals, noisy neighbours, and even dog fouling since 2010.

Techniques vary from direct surveillance, such as following a suspect, to intercepting their phone records.

Sandwell Council has used powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 180 times since 2010. Wolverhampton used it 152 times, Staffordshire County Council 33 and Dudley Council 18 times. Stafford Borough Council used it just five times. But the use of these powers has been cut dramatically in the past two years since local authorities were required to get magistrates' permission.

The use of such powers has been hit by controversy after it was revealed police had been using the legislation on journalists to identify their sources.

Campaigners say the law was passed to fight terrorism and serious organised crime but authorities were using it to intrude into residents' lives.

Terrorism

West Bromwich East MP Tom Watson, who has campaigned for surveillance laws to be restricted, said: "RIPA was passed with the intention it would be used to fight terrorism and serious organised crime – not to spy on ordinary people."

All councils say they have not targeted journalists.

Sandwell used the powers 95 times on trading standards investigations, 72 times in anti-social behaviour cases, ten environmental protection breaches and three cases of benefit fraud.

Price is right for Sandwell mayor job

COUNCILLOR Barbara Price, who has been a Rowley councillor for 16 years, is the new Mayor of Sandwell.

She has chosen Acorns Children's Hospice as her charity.

Councillor Price, of Macmillan Road, Rowley Regis, will have her husband Councillor Robert Price, as consort. Councillor Julie Webb is deputy mayor with daughter Nicola as consort. The new mayor and deputy mayor were invested at a ceremony at Sandwell Council House on Tuesday.

Councillor Price was deputy mayor to Councillor Linda Horton, mayor-elect to her husband Councillor Robert Price in 2008 and deputy mayor in 2001 to former council leader Tarsem King. She was Rowley town leader for five years.

Councillor Mrs Price said: "I am really looking forward to going around the borough to meet the many people who do so much work for their communities."

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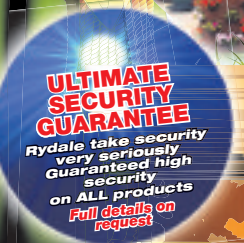
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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



But where does the poverty line fall?

ALMOST a third of people in the UK fell below the poverty line at least once between 2010 and 2013, according to new figures from the Office of National Statistics.

The thing is though, look around you, and you don't see thousands of Oliver Twist-type street urchins clamouring for food, or old people dressed in rags.

Which is not really surprising, when poverty is these days defined as having a disposable income of less than 60 per cent of the national average.

But surely the whole point of averages is that some people will come above that line, and others will be below it.

And extending that logic a little further, a sure fire way to lift people out of poverty would be to reduce the average standard of living.

Now there are undoubtedly some very poor people in the world today, children suffering from malnutrition, families without clean drinking water, but by and large they don't live in this country.

And they don't have mobile phones, televisions or a disposable income of any kind, let alone one that is 60 per cent of the national average.

The truth is that almost everybody in this country is comparatively well-off, and we really should be more appreciative of what we do have.

Casual use of terms like 'poverty' do not just give people a sense of entitlement. They are also a great insult to the millions of genuinely poor people around the world.

□□□□

THERE has been a lot of talk recently about police cuts. Next month Dudley, which is Britain's second biggest town, will be without a police station which is open to the public, which is a truly ridiculous state of affairs.

The message doesn't seem to have got through to police in Wallsend, near Newcastle-upon-Tyne though.

Last week, the Northumbria force managed to scramble four patrol cars and a helicopter as they chased three cows which escaped from a dairy farm. One of the poor creatures was shot by police marksmen.

A bit harsh. I thought in those parts, when confronted by large animals, they just got Newcastle United fans to punch them in the face.

□□□□

ACCORDING to a new study by boffins in Iran, flowers in vases filled with urine will last twice as long as those in ordinary water.

Which should make for some wonderful conversations at dinner parties about the stunning array of blooms in the middle of the table. Probably best not to go into too much detail about the fertiliser for the home-grown potatoes though.



Jahni Dyer with Tonia Daley-Campbell, both in Lenny's TV drama



Jahni Dyer, aged 9, who plays young Danny, in rehearsals



Sparks fly as the crew films a scene in Thomas Dudley's foundry

Lenny visits teenage years in new TV show

CRAIG HUGHES meets the young actors in Lenny Henry's Black Country television drama Danny And The Human Zoo

IT'S Black Country life 40 years ago as told by one of the region's most famous sons.

And the people and places in Lenny Henry's new drama, Danny And The Human Zoo, will be made flesh and blood by young actors from a local drama school.

Lenny, born and raised in Dudley, said the piece is semi-autobiographical and gives a glimpse into life as a working-class teenager growing up in the 1970s.

It centres around the character Danny Fearon, a talented impressionist, and his working-class Jamaican family, as he rises to fame as a stand-up comedian.

The cast will include Arthur Darvill from Broadchurch, One Foot In The Grave actor Richard Wilson and Mark Benton from Waterloo Road.

Speaking of the drama, in which Lenny plays Danny's father Samson, he said: "I can't believe that we're finally shooting my screenplay Danny And The Human Zoo! This is a fantasy memoir of the first two years of my career — my beginnings, working on the zoo, working men's clubs and all that stuff that happened to me in the mid-Seventies — but crammed into 90 minutes.

"I think, although it's not exactly what happened, we'll get a strong sense of what it might have been like for a young black kid from Dudley to be suddenly hurled into the maelstrom of this business we call show."

Locations

Filming has started and includes members of the Active Creative Training School (ACTS), run by Tonia Daley-Campbell in Wolverhampton.

The youngsters, along with Tonia herself, have been filming at locations across the Black Country and Birmingham. The 37-year-old



Actor and comedian Lenny Henry with young actors from Wolverhampton Tyrique Douglas, Taylia-May Campbell and Tyrese McKenzie on set for his new drama, Danny And The Human Zoo

has been running ACTS from Wolverhampton Heritage Centre, on Clifford Street, for two years, offering coaching and support for five to 18-year-olds interested in acting.

Tonia, who has four children of her own and is also a foster parent to two others, said the role meant even more due to Lenny's involvement.

Despite the joy of getting the role of Mrs Patterson, the mother of Cherry, who is a friend of Danny, she said: "I was more excited the kids had got the parts. The exciting thing for me about this project is it is Midlands-based, it is filmed in the Midlands and by Midlands

actors. He is an inspiration to up-and-coming young people from the Midlands — and the Black Country in particular — because it is not easy forging a career in the arts."

The school runs on Saturday mornings between 9.45am and 12.30pm and there are plans to expand.

"They learn acting skills, audition skills, they have confidence building," Tonia said. "Whenever they get asked to audition for a role they are equipped. Young kids from Wolverhampton are getting opportunities that are not always easy to come by unless you are in London," she added.

Jahni Dyer has been given the part of playing a young Danny before the character hits his teenage years. The nine-year-old, from Wolverhampton, has been learning about acting for two years and met Lenny during filming on several occasions — even getting tips on dance moves.

The pupil at St Judes Academy said: "I was amazed because I didn't think I was going to get it. I am excited because I am going to see myself on TV. The people I tell think 'wow'."

Jahni said he was pleased to have got the role based, particularly as Lenny was involved.

"He is a big time actor," he said. "He helped me. I am meant to be dancing to My Boy Lollipop. He showed me some different dance moves. He is a very nice guy."

Taylia-May Campbell, from Fordhouses, wasn't keen on wearing 1970s-style clothing after being cast as Danny's niece Marjory. But the 12-year-old, who goes to Aldersley High, said being part of filming for the programme is one of the best things she has been involved in.

Screaming

After finding out she had got the part, she said: "I was happy, I was running around the house screaming.

"I didn't know who Lenny Henry was until my mother told me. He is funny, he is really nice.

"I was nervous at first. Then I started to get used to being on camera. It is one of the best things I have ever done. Sometimes I didn't like putting on the clothes. It was only a dress but I am not used to wearing dresses."

Tyrese McPherson-McKenzie, 13, of Penn, is playing Terrence, the nephew of Danny. Tyrese, who attends St Chad's School, said: "I was surprised, I have never been picked for anything like that before. I was happy but I didn't expect it. My family are happy for me.

"I have found it fun in front of the camera. The best thing was seeing how it is made, how they build the set."

Tyrique Douglas, 14, of Pendeford, is performing the role of nephew Albert.

After being told he was to be part of the production the St Edmunds School pupil said: "I was excited because I was going to experience what it is like on TV."

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Council could learn from fable of Pied Piper

IN Robert Browning's classic poem The Pied Piper the failure of the councillors of Hamelin to keep their word results in cataclysmic consequences for the townspeople and the councillors themselves.

There is a clear parallel between the situation in Hamelin in 1376 and that which pertains in Dudley in 2015.

Your column of May 21 quite rightly bewails the repeated disruption to life in the town, the loss of trade, the damage to Dudley's reputation and the enormous cost of policing when right-wing groups decide to target the town.

However, the simple fact remains that had Dudley council implemented the condition it presented to Dudley Muslim Association regarding the building of their mosque ie that it should be 'substantially completed' before the end of 2008 or the council would exercise its option to buy back the site, then this situation would never have arisen.

The demonstration by AFFFFAI scheduled for June 13 would not now be taking place and, similarly, the protests by Britain First and EDL earlier in the year could have been avoided.

Make no mistake, the responsibility for this divisive, dangerous and farcical situation lies firmly at the feet of the members of Dudley Council.

Maybe the incumbents of Priory Road feel quite secure so soon after an election, but I would remind them of the words of the good folk of Hamelin who warned:

'Rouse up, sirs, give your brains a racking, to find the remedy we're lacking, or sure as fate, we'll send you packing.'

B WILLIAMS
Wordsley

No fine for WBA after fans invade

ASTON Villa are fined £200,000 for 'allowing' fans to invade the pitch at the end of their cup match against Albion.

WBA have no fine, or any other punishment, despite their fans' behaviour ripping out seats and throwing them. Seemingly because they were the 'away' team and 'responsibility' was thrust on the 'home' team.

Villa supporters 'invaded' the pitch through 'silliness and exuberance' at their team winning an FA cup match. They haven't had much to celebrate so their behaviour may be understandable if not forgiven.

Blackpool have not yet been told what punishment, if any, they will get after the invasion by their fans which caused the last match to be abandoned. The Football League has already ruled that the 'score' at the time of the match being abandoned would be the 'result'.

Fair play?
M GOUGH
Wombourne

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
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Letters should be brief and **MUST** include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

EMAIL

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Some sympathy for harassed parents

I AM writing in reply to letter entitled 'Don't shout and swear at children'.

I don't like parents shouting and swearing at kids, who does? But, now I have a teenager, I am far more understanding.

What you see is a child chasing a pigeon, but perhaps his mother had asked him repeatedly to stay by her side and not run away? Perhaps the child often chased birds and got lost? Perhaps the child had a penchant for kicking birds (not all kids are as angelic as they seem)? Maybe they've had a really stressful morning and this was simply the last straw?

No one is a perfect parent and anyone who claims to be is lying to themselves as well as everyone else. No one is blessed with the patience of a saint and, although we love our children to pieces, sometimes they do drive us to the very edge of distraction and we lose our temper.

I am not condoning any form of child abuse, but perhaps a little understanding that children can be frustrating at times and we can sometimes lose our tempers, we're only human after all.

K WHITAM
Halesowen

A Liberal Democrat alternative

I'D like to say a huge thank you to all those who voted for me and for the Liberal Democrats in the Stourbridge constituency in the General Election.

We were not disgraced but we were beaten into fourth place, so cannot claim to have done well! For our party locally the only way is up.

Many have realised that a weakened Liberal Democrat Party could be a disaster at a time when there is such a need to defend social justice, tolerance and public services, and to promote international co-operation on peace, migration and climate change.

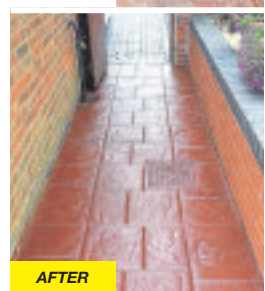
Nationally 13,000 have joined the Liberal Democrats since the election. If you would like to help us rebuild, and you live in Dudley North, Dudley South, Stourbridge, or Halesowen and Rowley Regis, please contact Simon Hanson on chair@ dudley-libdems.org.uk

CHRIS BRAMALL
Stourbridge

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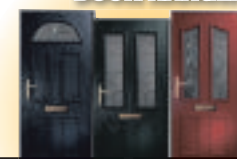
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Milestones marked at archives centre



Richard Lewis, archivist at Dudley archives, with a copy of the Domesday Book that is on display at the exhibition

A NEW exhibition has launched at Dudley's archives centre celebrating two important historic milestones in local and national democracy.

This year is the 800th anniversary of the signing of the Magna Carta, as well as the 150th anniversary of the incorporation of Dudley borough.

The Magna Carta was signed by King John at Runnymede in 1215 and was the first formal document stating that the King had to follow the laws of the land.

It guarantees the rights of people against the wishes of the king and paved the way for the trial by jury.

While 150 years ago, the municipal borough of Dudley was formed, being incorporated in 1865.

It centred on the town of Dudley, along with the suburbs of Netherton and Woodside.

The new exhibition, called Democracy in Dudley, which has gone on show at the centre in Tipton Road, including treasures from the archives.

It includes the original Charter of Incorporation complete with seal; four 17th century letters referencing Dudley Castle's role in the Civil War; a Victorian copy of the Magna Carta and a facsimile of the Domesday Book.

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, said: "This is a fascinating exhibition which shows us exactly how the democratic way of life that we take for granted today has developed over the years."

"The exhibition also showcases some examples of original sources held at the archives for researching your family, home or local area. There are also some great sources for people interested in doing some local or family history research."

The centre is open on Monday to Saturday from 9am until 5pm, or 7pm on Thursdays. Call (01384) 812770.

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Mayor issue is a stumbling block

DANIEL WAINWRIGHT
Political Editor

AS a name, West Midlands Combined Authority is probably the most sterile, dull and insipid term it's possible to come up with. But it is, at least, not the dreaded Greater Birmingham.

With the Tories pushing forward on their devolution plans the race is on to make sure the West Midlands does not fall behind Greater Manchester and the emerging 'northern powerhouse' for funding and powers.

A few months ago council leaders were at pains to stress there would be no more bureaucracy and no new tiers of politicians claiming allowances or salaries at our expense.

Chancellor George Osborne, however, wants an elected mayor to tie it all together.

Essential

It is a perfectly reasonable wish. After all, there will be a heck of a lot of power – transport, regeneration, skills and possibly health – concentrated in the hands of this authority and some democratic accountability is going to be essential in order to hold its feet to the fire and stop one area benefitting at the expense of others.

The problem for the Chancellor is Birmingham and Coventry already voted against having a mayor for their respective cities when they were each given a referendum.

Imposing one without going back to the people, even though it is markedly



George Osborne – keen for mayor

different to what they were voting on before, would not go down well.

David Cameron, meanwhile, seems more relaxed about the mayor idea and says one size does not fit all.

This might give the council leaders of the Black Country, Birmingham, Coventry and Solihull – if they sign on the dotted line – a little wriggle room. But the more options they have on the table the longer it is likely to take to come to an agreement.

And time is of the essence when regions of the country are effectively competing against each other for scarce resources and funding. As to what to call the authority Greater Birmingham rolls off the tongue. Most people, particularly potential investors, could point to the area on a map. Except as a name it ends up doing everything the Black Country has always resisted – rolling it out to the second city. The com-



David Cameron – more relaxed

bined authority would contain no fewer than three cities – Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Coventry. That at least should give some weight to the argument that Greater Birmingham should be binned.

There is still the issue of an entity already having that name, specifically the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership. This would come under the combined authority too. So we'd have an entity that isn't called Greater Birmingham, presiding over one that is.

The GBSLEP also represents areas that would not have anything to do with the combined authority too. Wyre Forest, Cannock Chase, and Lichfield are all in it. But none of their councils are signed up.

Finally the question remains over what happens to the elected police and crime commissioner's job or the West Midlands Fire and Rescue.

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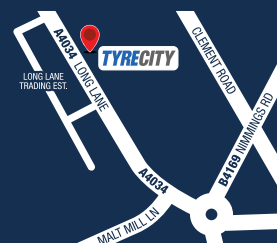
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10 Story contest is write stuff for youngsters

Halesowen Chronicle Thursday, May 28, 2015

CLEVER children across the Dudley borough will be going head to head in a writing competition.

Primary school pupils will have their pens at the ready, competing for the title of Dudley Young Writer of the Year.

The award aims to celebrate the best in children's fiction, non-fiction and poetry. It is also set up to showcase the talents of pupils aged seven to 11. There will be two age categories for each subject – seven to nine years and 10 to 11 years.

The winners will be announced at a special ceremony in July.

Council leader Pete Lowe said: "There are so many talented writers at our schools. This competition gives them the opportunity to be really creative and showcase their skills.

"Entries can include newspaper reports, discussions, poems or any kind of creative writing. I'm looking forward to seeing some of the work they produce later this year."

Prizes for the winners will include certificates, trophies and vouchers.

The vouchers have been donated by businesses in the borough. They include The Rye Market, Stourbridge, Waitrose, Stourbridge, Waterstones, Less4Office Supplies, Halesowen, intu Merry Hill and Tesco. The Rotary Club of Halesowen and Rowley Regis has also provided prizes.

Pensioner would like to have his pots back

A pensioner is appealing for his plant pots to be returned after they were stolen from outside his home.

Two concrete pots were taken from the garden of Bryan Darby, aged 73, in Halesowen Road, Netherton, on Tuesday last week. They are grey and had plants in at the time.

Mr Darby is hoping someone will come forward with information or return them. Call Brierley Hill Police on 101.

London families offered £7k if move to the Black Country

Time for afternoon tea at the hall



Councillor Khurshid Ahmed samples afternoon tea at Himley Hall with managers Tracey Reece and Lisa Guest

VISITORS will be able to enjoy afternoon tea in the footsteps of the royals for the first time at Himley Hall and Park.

For the summer months, the landmark venue on the Dudley-South Staffordshire is offering a new menu of 'two-bite' cakes, ribbon sandwiches and warm scones.

People will be able to dine in one of the grand rooms, before taking a stroll through the grounds designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabi-

net member elect responsible for halls, said: "I'm sure the idea of afternoon tea at one of the most stunning settings for miles will appeal to a lot of people.

Summer

"It's just one of many things you can do at Himley Hall over the summer months."

Afternoon tea will be available at the hall, which was once where royal newly-weds spent their honeymoon and princes and earls were regular

visitors, from June and throughout the summer.

"Sandwiches on offer include Wiltshire ham and tomato, free range egg and mayonnaise and mature cheddar cheese and farmhouse chutney.

Warm scones are served with strawberry conserve and thick fresh cream.

The cakes on the menu include Belgian brownies and white chocolate and raspberry cheesecake slices.

For further information call Himley Hall on (01384) 817817. Prices start from £17.95.

LONDON boroughs have relocated dozens of families on benefits to the Black Country because it's cheaper than finding accommodation in the capital.

One council is even paying families up to £7,000 to move out in a bid to free up space.

The authorities are housing people with private landlords in Sandwell and blaming the £26,000-a-year benefits cap.

But council leaders in the West Midlands say this is putting pressure on resources and housing here and claim it has vindicated their attempt to stop 'benefits tourism'.

Two councils in London revealed they had sent 39 families to the West Midlands between them over the past year. Newham Council alone sent 25. Thirteen of those went to Sandwell, nine to Walsall and three to Wolverhampton. Brent Council did not break down its figures but said it had relocated 14 households since April 2014.

Wandsworth Council has also written to residents offering to pay them up to £7,000 to move 'within or near the surrounding areas of Birmingham'. It offers payments starting at £3,500 to vacate two bedroom properties up to £5,000 for a four or five-bedroom home, topped up with £2,000 to cover deposit and moving costs.

Brent Council had around 4,500 families on the housing waiting list — yet Sandwell Council frequently has in excess of 7,000 on its waiting list.

Sandwell Council was criticised by a judge last year after it tried to introduce a residency test that said people had to have lived in the borough for at least two years to be eligible for support with council tax.

Councillor Margaret McLennan, housing chief at Brent Council, said: "Our main priority is to secure suitable accommodation for those who need it. Unfortunately, accommodation cannot always be provided in Brent."

Jobs advice on offer for teenagers

FREE drop-in jobs and advice sessions for young people in Wednesbury and Tipton have been set up.

Personal advisers from Sandwell Connexions will be on hand to talk about apprenticeships and employment and provide support with CVs and interviews. Sessions are targeted at people aged 15 to 19, and up to 25 for people with learning difficulties.

Sessions are at Wednesbury Town Hall, in Holyhead Road, every Thursday from 11am-2pm. In Tipton, personal advisers will be at Glebefields Library, St Mark's Road, one Friday every four weeks, from 1pm-3pm, starting on June 12. They will also be at Tipton Library, Unity Walk, one Wednesday every four weeks from 1pm-4pm, starting on June 17 and Great Bridge Library, Sheepwash Lane, one Wednesday every four weeks from 1pm-4pm from June 24.

Outreach venues are due to be rolled out into West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis in the coming weeks.

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Joey drops in to sign books at Merry Hill



After a biography at 24, TOWIE star Joey Essex will be signing his latest book, which readers can co-write

REALITY TV star Joey Essex, who found fame on The Only Way is Essex, will be signing his new book at Merry Hill Shopping Centre tomorrow (Friday).

He will be at Waterstones at 11am signing copies of The Book of You (and Me).

The 24-year-old television personality and DJ left popular TV show TOWIE in 2013 and has since appeared on a host of TV programmes, including winning celebrity winter sports show The Jump.

The all-action celeb also part in diving show Splash! and finished fourth in the 13th series of I'm a Celebrity...Get Me Out of Here!

Fragrance

The book, Joey's second, is designed as a journal and includes pages for readers to create their own story with him. His first book, Being Reem, was a biography.

Fellow TOWIE stars Lauren Pope, Lydia Bright, Fearne McCann and Georgia Kousoulou were at Merry Hill earlier this month to promote the fragrance The Only Way is Marbs. They were on hand to meet fans near The Perfume Shop as the TOWIE stars marked the TV show's return to the Spanish resort.

Blind Dave backs fun run date at festival

BLIND fundraiser Dave Heeley has been announced as guest of honour for an annual fun run which is part of the Black Country Festival.

The popular marathon runner, known as Blind Dave, will be starting this year's Black Country Run taking place in Halesowen on July 5.

Organisers have moved the road race event from its September date to coincide with this year's Black Country Festival.

The festival, which successfully launched last year, brings together community, music and arts events during the month.

Dave, who lives in West Bromwich, recently competed in the gruelling 160-mile Marathon des Sables through the Sahara Desert.

He is aiming to raise £30,000 towards West Bromwich Albion's charity The Albion Foundation which helps boost community sports and events.

The fundraiser has already brought in £27,000 and hopes fun runs and events during this summer will help him hit that target.

"I'm really looking forward to doing a running on my door step. It might not be as hot as the Sahara," he said.

"We did the Black Coun-

By Andrew Turton

try Run as Shrek last year. This year, for a laugh, I'll be with my two guides, and we'll be running it as The Three Blind mice.

"I'll be the good looking one though. Serious though, it should be a great day with a good atmosphere."

Rotarian Alan Bowler, founder and organiser of the Black Country Run, said the event is going from strength to strength.

"Since the Rotary Club of Halesowen and Rowley Regis started the event four years ago, we have raised more than £50,000 for good causes," he said.

"We keep on getting bigger every year, we had 800 runners last year and this time we hope for more than 1,000."

Blind Dave joined rotarians at Lifestyle Fitness gym, in Hagley Road West, Quinton, to launch the event and meet sponsors.

Picture



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A CHAMPION for denture wearers, Steven Burchell DipCDT RCS(Eng) has spent more than ten years campaigning to "break the taboo over false teeth and prove that high-quality dentures can indeed be nothing short of life-changing."

Evangelical about what new-generation denture prescriptions can achieve, he says the palette of solutions to deliver a more youthful, engaging smile has never been so great, with traditional, high-quality handmade-on-the-premises prosthetics; suction diaphragm dentures; and implant-retained over-dentures.

"People have come to us with ill-fitting teeth, sunken cheeks and

pinched lips and we have been privileged to transform their looks, providing teeth that not only are aesthetically pleasing and hugely functional, but also successfully support facial structures just like their real teeth once did. It can take years off people."

Can dentures ever be glamorous? "Emphatically, yes," adds Steven.

Strident advances in technology, improved materials and revised clinical procedures are all helping "to drive the denture revolution forward and indeed introduce a real sense of natural-looking glamour to what can be accomplished," he says.

Revolution in denture provision

Suction solution is this the answer for you?

A CUTTING-EDGE development that helps to resolve the stability problems faced by thousands of denture wearers is being offered by the Denture Clinic.

Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng) GDC108353, who heads the teams at his North Street practice in Dudley, and other clinics across the region, says the invention has the potential to resolve all-too-common denture stability issues.

Prosthetics are held in place by tiny valve-operated suction devices which are built into the prescription. A clever diaphragm principle, triggered by bite pressure on patients' gums, creates a 'sucking' vacuum between the soft-tissue mouth lining and the prosthetic.

Steven, whose clinics attracts patients from as far as Spain, the Isle of Skye and the Isle of Anglesey, says: "In recent times we have seen, what I can describe only as strident clinical steps forward, with implant-retained over-dentures, 'teeth-in-a-day' implant procedures and suction solution dentures, all coming into main-stream dentistry.

"We also have clever injection moulding



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"Implant dentistry as a resolve for stabilisation issues is not suitable for everyone, neither is it all patients' first preference. The Ultra Suction

prosthetics system offers a possible alternative clinical solution.

"The beauty of this affordable technology is that it can deliver for the right patient excellent denture retainer qualities without the invasive clinical procedures required for implant work."

Lower dentures can often be troublesome when stability is compromised by shrinking gums and bone erosion - all part of the natural ageing process. Ill-fitting dentures create painful friction problems on gums and not least, can be a regular source of embarrassment.

Reduction

Steven adds: "The device can be mounted on upper or lower teeth and because of its efficiency allows us to consider a reduction in the size of the acrylic 'plate' which can improve speech and taste.

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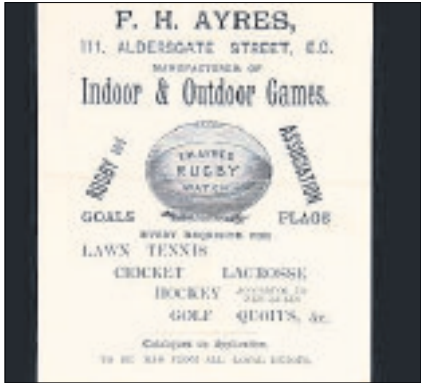


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West Brom's victory came at the third attempt, against the next season's champions



The advertising page on the back of the rare programme



The West Bromwich Albion team who were winners of the FA Cup in 1888

Return to Baggies' glory days as rare programme sells for £20k at auction

A MATCHDAY programme from the 1888 FA Cup Final when West Bromwich Albion upset the odds to beat Preston North End, originally bought for one penny, has been sold at auction for £20,000.

The sale makes the historic piece of memorabilia one of the most expensive football programmes ever purchased.

The 1888 cup final was held in front of 19,000 fans at The Oval cricket ground in London, was a million miles away from the glitz of the showpiece final that awaits Aston Villa and Arsenal at Wembley on Saturday. But like Villa this year,

MEMORY LANE

Report by Richard Guttridge

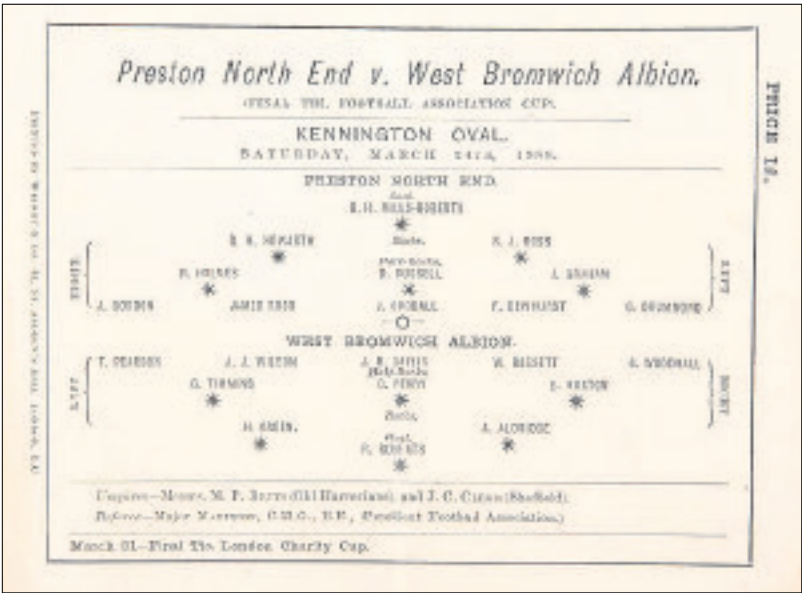
Albion went into the game as underdogs. The following season Preston would finish the first Football League season undefeated and during their run to the 1888 final they thrashed Hyde 26-0.

But on a March afternoon it was the Baggies that were victorious, winning 2-1 to bring the cup to the Black Country for the first time. The programme, which was made up of just a single sheet featuring the team line-ups and an advertisement on the back, is thought to be one of the few that survive from the momentous day in the club's history.

It was bought at Graham Budd Auctions in London on Tuesday by a private collector. A photograph of Albion's 1888 FA Cup winning team was included with the programme.

In 2006, the programme from the 1889 FA Cup final between Preston and Wolves sold for £21,850, which at the time was the highest amount paid for a programme. Albion were appearing in the FA Cup Final for the third consecutive year in 1888 but after two heart-breaking defeats they finally got their hands on the silverware.

But another reason the programme is desirable for collectors is that the final ended in controversy, with many observers feeling that the referee had shown bias towards West Brom's all English 11.



The line-up of teams for the final, held at the 'Kennington Oval' – known as The Oval today – as printed in 1888

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FOCUS ON CRADLEY AND CRADLEY HEATH

Plans for rundown shops to be revealed at meeting

A PUBLIC meeting will be held to reveal plans to redevelop rundown shops after a community campaign for action.

Local people have been demanding action to tackle the eyesore shops in Colley Gate, Cradley, which they claim are blighting the area. Members of Cradley Action Group have run a two year bid to have the shopping parade revitalised.

Dudley Council officers will attend a public meeting held by the group to update the campaigners on June 17. It will take place at The Laurels Club, in Windmill Hill, Colley Gate, from 6.30pm.

Council officers had been considering four bids by developers wanting to transform the area.

Campaigner Richard Legiewicz said it was 'good news' that council officers were able to update them on proposals and he urged residents to turn out for the meeting.

A year ago council workers were forced to board up the shops after they were targeted by arsonists twice in two days. In the first incident a dozen firefighters had to tackle a blaze at a lock-up behind the shops and in the second a man had to flee his home after a fire at the former Lucky Star takeaway.

Dudley Council leader Councillor Pete Lowe said: "Once we have a developer in place we will be able to talk at length about our

By Andy Turton

plans for the area, which will benefit everyone. We are continuing to work with ward members and we remain committed to resolving this as soon as possible."

Tree

Meanwhile, residents of Lantern Road in Cradley Heath have lost their battle to have a tree removed which they say is causing damage to their homes.

Some residents had called for the tree to be given the chop. One resident, Susan Lambert, saying its branches had caused damage to her shed and summerhouse. But rather than order for its removal Dudley Council's planning committee instead decided to protect it by placing a tree preservation order on it. But the order does not prevent the owner from cutting branches back.



Kimber's Geoff Turnbull and Larry Joyce take a close look at the new forge in Cradley Heath

Firm's £1m forge will create jobs

MORE than £1 million has been invested into a state-of-the-art forge that will help a Black Country manufacturer increase sales and create five new jobs.

Kimber Drop Forgings, which employs 27 at its Gawne Lane site in Cradley Heath, has unveiled a new forge and aims to reach £5m sales by the end of the year.

Backed by the Regional Growth Fund and Sandwell Council, the investment was celebrated at an event where guests heard how the facility will be air-conditioned, sound proofed and features a 70 hundred-weight hammer. Kimber will also take on five more workers at the facility with a number of these expected to be apprentices.

"You don't hear about many new forges being built in the UK, so we're delighted to put our sector on the map with this sizeable investment," said Larry Joyce, group chairman.

Picnic will celebrate chain strike

FAMILIES are urged to take a picnic to a festival celebrating women chain-makers. The event in Cradley Heath High Street on July 12 is being dubbed a 'picnic with a purpose'.

Louise Blakeway, secretary of organisers Cradley Heath Creative, said: "We want people to share their favourite food with anyone who comes along and to tell us why they love it so much. We'll provide the eating gear — spoons, plates and serviettes."

There will also be activities for youngsters during the event from 11am to 5pm.

The festival as a whole will bring to life the victory of the women chain-makers of Cradley Heath through drama, dance, poetry and performance.

The 1910 Women Chain-makers' strike, led by Mary Macarthur, paved the way for the minimum wage.

Regional win for Kee Safety

THE chief executive of a Cradley Heath-based business has won a regional award.

Chris Milburn, of Kee Safety, which supplies safety solutions and products, was chief executive of the year in the Midlands final British Private Equity and Venture Capital Association Awards.

Kee, at Cradley Business Park, Overend Road, also won the mid market management team of the year award.

Super Bob can sing too

WEST Bromwich Albion fans packed into a bar in Cradley Heath to meet club legend 'Super Bob' Taylor.

Mr Taylor was at Jay's Bar in Graingers Lane to host a question and answer session, and also demonstrated his singing skills by performing his favourite song, Neil Diamond's Sweet Caroline, on the karaoke.

Super Bob's meet and greet raised around £350 for charity.

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When will we see them again? At hall



The Three Degrees, due to perform at Wednesbury Town Hall – Helen Scott, Valerie Holiday and Freddie Pool

THE Three Degrees are coming to a stage in the Black Country in July. The famous singing group, known around the world for their hit songs, will be performing at Wednesbury Town Hall.

Fifteen women have been members of the popular American group since it was formed in 1963 in Philadelphia.

The current The Three Degrees are Helen Scott, Valerie Holiday, who have both members since the late 1960s and

Freddie Pool, who joined in 2011. Their tour of the UK will see them perform classics including Dirty Ol' Man and Take Good Care Of Yourself.

Councillor Elaine Costigan, who represents Wednesbury North ward, said it was a coup for the town hall to attract The Three Degrees.

Tickets cost £20 and are available from the box office on 0121 556 4914.

Erim's Kilimanjaro coup

A STUDENT will be scaling the dizzy heights of Mount Kilimanjaro to raise money for Meningitis Research Foundation (MRF).

Erim Khan, from Tipton, is hoping to generate £2,990 for the charity by completing the six-day challenge in September. The trek is being run by Choose a Challenge who create tailor-made adventures for students.

The 20-year-old, Erim who is currently studying mathematics at Kent University said: "When I started to raise money for MRF my friends and family shared their personal experiences about this devastating disease – this not only inspired me to raise money, but also to continue to raise even after I reach my target."

"With the MenB vaccine now available for babies you can see the great work MRF have achieved and I feel proud to be a part of this team."

Tom DeFaine, events fundraising assistant at MRF, said "We are so grateful to Erim for agreeing to climb Kilimanjaro in aid of MRF."

"Meningitis and septicaemia are diseases that can leave a baby, child or adult fighting for their life within hours of the first symptoms. As well as having the adventure of a lifetime they will be raising much-needed funds and awareness of this devastating disease." Anyone wanting to sponsor Erim can visit her online fundraising page – www.justgiving.com/Erimiska/



Erim Khan from Tipton

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ALL AREAS COVERED

New homes on way as part of centre's £20m facelift

DOZENS of new homes will be built as part of the next phase a £20 million transformation of the heart of West Bromwich. Offices will also be created during the next stage of the Urban 180 regeneration project, which is now underway.

The development sits on the corner of High Street and Bull Street, known as the Eastern Gateway site. It is the latest project following in the footsteps of the £200m New Square shopping centre and Sandwell College's revamp of The Public.

City's square designs go on display

DESIGNS for a revamp of Centenary Square in Birmingham city centre are on display.

A competition, launched by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and the Landscape Institute on behalf of Birmingham City Council, offered architects and designers the chance to transform the square.

Council chiefs say they want it to become a 'cultural hub and desirable space where residents and visitors alike can relax and socialise'.

Five designs were shortlisted from nearly 200 entries from around the world earlier this year, with the five finalists then each given £5,000 to develop their initial concepts into detailed proposals. These proposals are on public display at the Library of Birmingham from until Saturday.

The exhibition takes place on the third floor and is accessible during the library's opening hours of 11am to 5pm.

The latest phase of work will be the construction of three bedroom houses and two-bedroom apartments.

There will also be commercial and office space provided as part of the development.

The Accord Group's executive director of regeneration Alan Yates said: "This is an important third phase of this fantastic award-winning development and forms a key part of regenerating the town centre area and we are delighted to be working in partnership with Sandwell Council on the next phase of the project. The homes are selling well and offer the local community a new, high quality housing option."

Director for regeneration and economy at Sandwell Council, Nick Bubalo, said: "Eastern Gateway continues to play an important role in delivering the council's regeneration priorities for West Bromwich."

"The new homes that are being delivered at Urban 180 will create a sustainable and modern living environment that will complement the work that has recently been completed in and around the town centre."

The first phase of the project saw the construction of 63 three and four-bedroom homes while 34 properties were built and finished in October during the second stage.

Pulis sets out on charity rowing challenge



One of the rowers, Tim Winn from Branston Golf and Country Club in Burton on Trent, with Baggies boss Tony Pulis

WEST Brom boss Tony Pulis said the work of an inspirational hospice is helping him cope with a tough 450-mile rowing challenge from London to Paris. The Baggies head coach set off with a group of plucky celebrities, sports stars and volunteers on the Tower to Tower adventure on Monday. Pulis is taking part to help raise money for a children's hospice – just a day after Baggies ended their Premier League season at Arsenal on Sunday.

The Tower to Tower Rowing Chal-

lenge sees the 24 rowers tackle the gruelling 450 nautical mile row over seven days.

The crew will be battling against the tidal effects of the Thames and the Seine, and conquer a 36-hour Channel crossing to reach the Eiffel Tower. It is being staged in aid of the Donna Louise Hospice, which Pulis discovered during his time as Stoke City manager.

Rowers arrived at Tower Bridge at St Catherine's Docks shortly before they set off at 8am – with crew mem-

bers each completing stints of around two hours each.

Pulis will be among those taking his place in one of the two rowing boats being accompanied down the River Thames by support crews.

On his boat he was joined by comedians Nick Hancock and Hugh Dennis, former Stoke City midfielder Rory Delap and his wife Helen. The 57-year-old grandfather said: "We have a good team with us. Everyone is supporting each other."

More than 2,000 caught by camera car

MORE than 2,000 fines have been dished out to motorists caught parking illegally by a 'camera car' in Sandwell in seven months.

It has been hitting the streets as part of a crackdown on roads around Sandwell's 120 schools. Fitted with CCTV equipment that automatically clocks number plates, the car captures images of vehicles parked illegally – including on yellow zig-zag 'keep clear' markings outside schools.

A total of 2,011 fines, at £70 each, have been issued between October 13 and May 12.

Fines are also issued for illegal parking on red routes and bus stops.

Highways boss Councillor Maria Crompton said: "We're responding to people's serious concerns about road safety, especially outside schools and on school routes. Our top priority is protecting children's safety."

"We know most motorists do take care and park legally but we need to get the message through to the minority who don't. Please – mums, dads, grandparents, carers, anyone picking a child up from school – the yellow zig-zags are there for a reason."

The scheme has cost the council £45,000. But bosses have defended the spending saying it worth it to reduce illegally parking and boost safety around schools.

Blaze factory is to be demolished soon

A PLASTICS factory in Oldbury which was destroyed when a huge fire ripped through it is expected to be demolished at the start of next month.

Roger Davies, operations manager at Teknor Apex, said final preparations were being made for the ruins of the Tat Bank Road factory to be bulldozed. The majority of the 50-strong workforce remain on home leave almost a month after the blaze.

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Birmingham Dogs' Home has a long and notable history in the care and protection of rescuing strays from the city streets of Birmingham and surrounding towns and villages in the West Midlands.

It was founded in 1892 on land that was made available by the late Sir Alfred Gooch Bart in New Canal Street, Birmingham, and proudly displayed the heading 'Birmingham Home for Lost and Starving Dogs' above its doors, a sign that is still present on the building, having been restored by its current owners.

Almost 100 years later - in 1987 - the Duchess of York officially opened the New Bartholomew Street home, which had been purpose-built to provide shelter and protection for over 150 abandoned dogs in comfortable kennel blocks with adjacent facilities, such as its own vets' clinic, puppy unit and isolation block.

The home is a charity which can only survive through the generosity and support of the general public and benefactors from the local community. Without this we would be unable to carry on the vital work of rescuing and rehoming abandoned dogs.

Rescued

We at Birmingham Dogs' Home are here primarily to ensure that the abandoned dogs coming into our care are rescued from their plight, reunited with owners who may have lost them or rehomed to families that will respect and nurture them.

Our *rehoming procedure* is designed and operated principally to be both practical and fair. It takes into consideration the high number of dogs brought into our homes on a daily and weekly basis as well as our desire to find the best possible home for each individual dog in our care.

The public are free to walk around our homes to view our dogs at any time during our opening hours of Monday to Saturday 11am - 4.45pm, but they should be aware that not all dogs are available for rehoming. Some are stray dogs due to be claimed by their owners while others are under assessment by our staff for either medical or behavioural concerns.

Once you have spent time with one of our dogs and are satisfied that you would like to offer the dog a home, our rehoming staff will take you through the various stages required to complete the process. No pressure is placed on anyone to offer a dog a home. We do stress, however, to anyone considering this option that they must take as much time necessary before deciding to reserve a dog in our care.

Abandoned

Your help brings hope and happy tomorrows for abandoned dogs

Fundraising is the life's blood of Birmingham Dogs' Home. Without it we simply could not exist.

With no Government funding, we survive purely through the generous contributions of the general public, interested companies, groups, organisations and kind-hearted

individuals who may or may not have purchased dogs from us and have remembered us in their Wills.

Legacies and other contributions are valued beyond compare and allow us to carry on providing care and protection for unwanted dogs.

This ensures that we can continue to rescue these unfortunate animals, oversee their welfare and good health and treat any conditions with first class veterinary attention all with one

aim in mind ... to see them happily rehomed to loving new families.

Our highly trained kennel team do the rest with loving pastoral care prior to their four-legged charges leaving for pastures new.

There are various fundraising routes available for those who wish to donate. Whichever, we at Birmingham Dogs' Home are deeply indebted to those of you who work so tirelessly to help us help them ...



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Halesowen Chronicle Thursday, May 28, 2015

Grange E TG

CHAIRMAN Hazel Smith presided over the meeting held on May 5 at Grange Court, Prescott Road, Stourbridge. She welcomed all members and visitors. The minutes of the previous meeting were read, accepted as a true record and signed. Treasurer Jill Attwood gave an up-to-date financial report.

Secretary Jean Williams told members she would be entering two teams into the Federation's Inter-Guild Quiz being held at Stourbridge Football Club on June 1. Tickets for the Rose Theatre, Kidderminster to see Noises Off have been reserved. The guild's birthday dinner will be held on June 30 at The Brasserie, Kidderminster.

The chairman introduced the speaker for the evening, David Bills who gave a very informative talk about the Kinver Rock Houses. Hazel gave a vote of thanks on behalf of the members.

Refreshments were served by the committee and the raffle was drawn with three lucky ladies winning the prizes.

This month's sales table consisting of sweets and chocolates went well with all items being sold.

The next meeting will be held at Grange Court on June 2 when the speaker will be Ken Gilkes who will be giving a talk entitled Odes of Life and Laughter. Next month's sales table will consist of flowers and plants.

The guild is still recruiting new members. Call the secretary on 01384 832439.

Ladies hear Wiggin about steelworks



Margaret Homer with speaker Nigel Wiggin at the last meeting

CHAIRMAN Mary Jones welcomed members and visitors to the May Luncheon at the Kingfisher Hotel, Wallheath.

It was an excellent three-course lunch followed by a most interesting talk by Nigel Wiggin, the great grandson of the founder of Old Hall Stainless Steel. It began in Bloxwich in 1893 by two blacksmiths from the family of six sons. They made buckles for the leather trade and Nigel's grandfather William Wiggin introduced stirrups.

In 1904 they moved into an Old Salvation Army Mission Hall. The business expanded until they had a workforce of more than 500 and during the war they worked for the Ministry of Defence, but in 1984 they were

Dudley South Ladies Luncheon Club

put out of business by cheap poor quality imports. Nigel now heads a 200-strong Old Hall Collectors Club on the internet. He was happy to value several ladies' tea sets which had been in daily use for more than 50-60 years and were still as good as new. Members could also buy quality items from the sales table at reasonable prices.

The next luncheon is on June 12 when the speaker is Ruth Lowe on Mary Quant Fashion and on July10, Ray Sturdy will present a See and Hear Quiz.

Afternoon tea marks 85th year

NEXT month is the flower festival at Trysull and it was decided that the club will make a donation to the church.

Also on June 4, it is the Centennial AGM from the Royal Albert Hall, which will be transmitted to the council offices at Codsall.

The day will include a buffet lunch. Trysull &

Trysull & Seisdon WI

Seisdon WI is celebrating its 85th anniversary this year and members are invited to afternoon tea at Dunsley Hall, Kinver on Saturday June 20.

Speaker was Jacqui Johnson from Keepers Lane Garden Centre, a family run

concern, which has been in business for 20 years.

Doreen Walker had a go at making up a basket, which was entered into the raffle and won by Margaret Farquharson.

The next meeting is on Thursday July 9 when the group will hear Peter Taunton talking about being a town crier.

2lb baby Jasmine is all grown up, 18 years on

WHEN Jasmine Pole was born, she weighed just 2lbs 10oz after being born 11 weeks prematurely.

But the Kingswinford teenager has overcome health issues and is now on the verge of celebrating her landmark 18th birthday.

Jasmine is currently studying a foundation course for children with special needs at Stourbridge College.

The 17-year-old, who turns 18 next month, suffers from dyspraxia, which means she has difficulty remembering things, but does not have any other health problems.

Her mother Sue said: "She has done really well and works really hard and is highly motivated, while she also plays some sport."

Sue had an emergency Caesarian after being rushed into hospital with pre-eclampsia, a pregnancy disorder characterised by high blood pressure and a large amount of protein in the urine. It places both mother and baby at risk.

The disease includes poor liver and kidney function, as well as shortness of breath due to fluid in the lungs.

Shock

Mrs Pole said: "It was a bit of a shock.

"Going straight to hospital and not knowing what the outcome was going to be when they scanned me to find out how big the baby was.



Jasmine Pole, who will be celebrating her 18th birthday, is pictured with mother

"I had an emergency Caesarian because she was big enough to be born."

She added: "She was born and came out crying and was rushed to the neo-natal unit — she was in there for six weeks."

Another risk to her daughter's health was that she had suffered an infection, which she was susceptible to due to her very low weight.

But Jasmine was eventually allowed to leave the hospital for home once she weighed 4lbs.

Mrs Pole added that she did not know what the effect of such early

health problems would be on Jasmine as she grew older.

However, the youngster went on to attend Crestwood Park Primary School in Kingswinford before going on to study at college.

Families

Mrs Pole says he received support from a group that helps the families of children who have had difficulties at birth.

She lives with her husband Jonathan, aged 53 and also has a son, Casey, aged 21.



The canal seen near Brownhills, as it snakes away into the distance



A coronation procession in Brownhills High Street



One of the pictures as featured in the book, of Watling Street with its telegraph poles



LNWR bus on Watling Street, from the early 1900s



A shop along Brownhills High Street, from days of old

Taking a butcher's at past Brownhills days

THE handwritten notes of a Black Country butcher have been pulled together to recall the life and times of a Walsall town.

The memoirs of Sid Pritchard, who spent all his 20th century working life on Brownhills High Street have been pulled together by historian Bill Mayo to create 'The Life and Times of Sid Pritchard'.

Sid worked in Cockram's butcher shop until it closed when the town's regeneration works began in the 1960s. He then bought his own corner shop, where he stayed until he retired.

In Mr Pritchard's own recorded notes, which have been printed as a prelude to the book, he said: "What follows is not intended a history of Brownhills but rather a recording of its image in the earlier days of the writer, born here in 1903, and who spent all his working days on its High Street.

MEMORY LANE

Report by Joe Edwards

"Working behind a shop counter offers a great opportunity to study people individually and en masse. It also teaches that life is about people rather than about things."

Bill, aged 78, from Commonside, Brownhills said: "Sid got to know all the local people, he was a very observant, humorous character — everyone got along with him.

"He grew up in Brownhills and knew everybody in the area, he wrote memoirs on scrap pieces of paper about happenings in his life but he died before he could finish writing his memoirs."

Bill said it was quite time consuming to sort through and make sense of the notes, and enlisted the help of friend, Dave Evans.

Bill would decipher the notes while Dave would type them up. He said: "We only put it in the book what Sid wrote down, some parts may be difficult to make

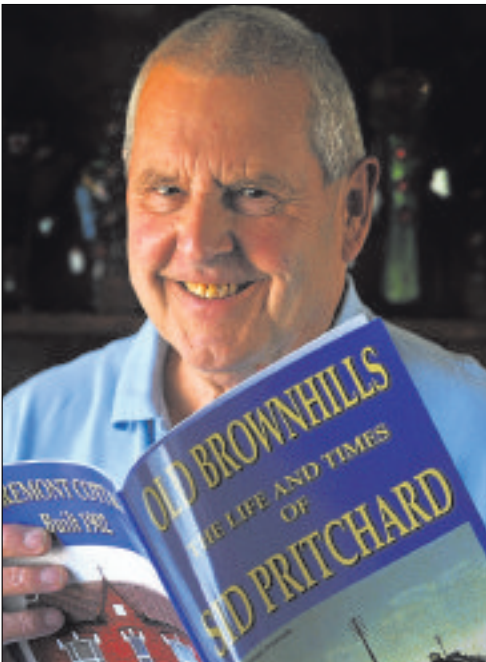
sense of but are explained in the back. I've had Sid's memoirs for around 10 years now, but over the last two months or so, with the help of Dave we have managed to really push and get the book done."

Extracts from the book include views on the appearance and characteristics of old Brownhills.

In recalling the canal he adds: "The footbridge across the canal was built by the canal company at the time the canal was cut, to maintain continuity of the footpath to Clayhanger.

"It also served as access for boatmen to the public house from the towpath on the opposite side of the canal. In the 1920s and 1930s the bridge was in a very dilapidated condition and proved amusement for youngsters who by standing at its centre could rock it considerably."

Mr Mayo's other works include Memories of Walsall Wood and Memories of Brownhills Past. The Life and Times of Sid Pritchard is priced £8 and is available in limited numbers from Brownhills Library.



Bill Mayo from Brownhills, with a copy of his latest book

Glass postcards go on show at international festival

DELICATE pieces of art have been brought together to form a giant glass wall to welcome visitors to this week's International Festival of Glass in Stourbridge.

The sixth festival celebrating the town's glassmaking heritage features breathtaking exhibitions of intricate artworks but the collection of glass postcards is considered by some as the jewel in the crown.

There are 168 postcards and each tells its own story having been delicately crafted by members of the Contemporary Glass Society and on show at the Rusking Glass Centre.

The group, which is known for coming up with unusual exhibitions,

settled on the postcard for this year's festival. Project leaders said they wanted to celebrate the postcard's simplicity and the fact they can 'say so much with so little'.

Victoria Scholes, a former chairman of the group, said: "This deceptively simple form of communication is more than just words and pictures.

"It delivers a glimpse of another life, a renewed friendship, a shared joke with a specially chosen image that all say so much with so little."

The society previously wowed art enthusiasts with a series of Olympic medallions to mark the London 2012 Games and are hoping to impress again in Stourbridge.



International Festival of Glass founder Keith Brocklehurst with the colourful glass postcards

Wrestlers ready to rumble at 2016 show

SOME of the biggest names in professional wrestling will be coming to the West Midlands next year.

Popular American wrestling company TNA will bring its Impact show to Birmingham's Barclaycard Arena in January. Top wrestlers Kurt Angle, James Storm, Mat Hardy and more are all scheduled to feature.

TNA president Dixie Carter said: "The energy and passion of the crowds on the 2015 UK Tour earlier this year was off the charts."

"In direct response to talking with the fans about what they loved and how we could take their experience to another level when we come back to Manchester, Birmingham and London in January 2016, we will be making some exciting changes on the next tour."

Tickets for the event in Birmingham, which will take place on January 31, 2016, go on sale today (Friday) and will cost from £17.50.

Homeless families' total hotel bill is £180k

NEARLY £200,000 was spent last year on paying for homeless families to stay in hotels and bed and breakfasts across the Black Country and Staffordshire.

Taxpayers last year forked out more than £180,000 to cover the cost of overnight stays, latest figures show.

Wolverhampton City Council housed the most at 136 families in bed and breakfasts in a year between 2014 and 2015 at a cost of £87,075.

A spokesman for Wolverhampton City Council said: "The council works hard to help and support families who are either at risk of becoming, or who have actually become, homeless."

"In cases where they have lost their tenancy, we work as quickly as we can to find them alternative accommodation."

Until this is arranged, it is necessary for the council to provide temporary and safe accommodation while the assessments are carried out.

"We don't place people in temporary accommodation any longer than is necessary and where possible, we seek to recover costs through housing benefit contributions."

Benefits

Sandwell Council said it currently has 18 households living in hotels in the region. And in 2013 to 2014 it cost £48,281 to shelter residents with nowhere to go, with a net cost to the authority of £10,138. The rest is covered by housing benefits.

The authority's deputy leader and cabinet member for neighbourhoods, Coun-

by Deborah Hardman

cillor Mahboob Hussain, said that the length of time a household stays in hotels varies, depending on individual circumstances, but normally it is for no longer than six weeks.

Dudley Council's cabinet member for housing Councillor Gaye Partridge said: "As a council, there are some situations where we have a duty to find people somewhere to stay when they find themselves homeless."

"Last year we helped 109 families find temporary accommodation in local bed and breakfast establishments."

"The majority of people stay between one and four nights and we are predicting a £20,000 spend on the service this year."

In Walsall between April 2014 and April 2015, Walsall Council has accommodated a total of 61 households and of these 21 had children. On average they stay seven nights.

The total cost is £6,000 with the council recouping the costs from housing benefit contributions where possible.

Coach Inclusive Glastonbury Hotel Eastbourne - Sussex Coast 11th-18th July 8 Days

The Glastonbury Hotel, offers a prime position on the seafront. All rooms are en-suite with television and tea/coffee making facilities, most are accessible by lift. A warm welcome can always be assured by all the staff. This hotel offers everything you need for a relaxing holiday making sure you want to come back again. Holiday includes coach transport, accommodation, breakfast, evening meal, four excursions plus entertainment.



£339

St George Hotel Great Yarmouth 13th-17th July 5 Days

The St George hotel is in a wonderful position directly opposite Wellington Pier, the 'Centre of Entertainments' in Great Yarmouth. All rooms are en-suite and have television and tea/coffee making facilities. This family run hotel offers a super level position just off the seafront, with easy access to many of the local facilities. Whether you want a fun filled summer holiday or a relaxing out of season break Great Yarmouth and the Norfolk coast offers something for all ages. Holiday includes coach transport, accommodation, breakfast, evening meal, two excursions plus entertainment.



£189

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Eastbourne — 29th June-3rd July 5 Days £199

Llandudno — 29th June-3rd July 5 Days £229

Torquay — 13th-17th July 5 Days £259

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Since the Regency period when seaside holidays became fashionable, people have been coming to Exmouth to enjoy the scenery on the East Devon coast, where the River Exe joins the sea. With a two mile stretch of soft golden sands, tree lined promenade and beautifully tailored gardens, a relaxing stroll "along the prom" is always a joy. This super 5 day break will include your coach transport to Exmouth and return, accommodation at the family run Ashton Court Hotel, rooms with private facilities, English breakfast, evening meal with a choice of menu, various entertainment plus two full day excursions.

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Prince presents OBE to Albion legend

WEST Bromwich Albion legend Brendon Batson has been presented at a ceremony in Buckingham Palace.

The 62-year-old has been recognised for his commitment in trying to eradicate racism from football. The former Baggies defender, who was affectionately known as one of the Three Degrees along with Cyrille Regis and the late Laurie Cunningham, helped blaze a trail for black footballers in the English game during the 1970s. He has campaigned doggedly for equality for black players and coaches.

Batson, who made 172 appearances during a four-year spell at the Hawthorns, was named among the recipients of awards on the New Year Honours list. He received his OBE for services to football from Prince William at Buckingham Palace.

Batson worked for the Professional Footballers' Association and more recently has been an adviser to the FA on equality and football development.

New light shone on a dark drama with Modfather back

REVIEW

by Leon Burakowski

The Merchant of Venice, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon

THE Merchant of Venice remains one of Shakespeare's most controversial plays and most relevant in its dealing with issues of racism and anti-semitism.

Presented on a super shiny reflective set of burnished metallic tiles, with a pendulum ominously swinging in the background, Polly Findlay's production updates the play in modern dress — it looks like the wardrobe department have raided Primark.

She also slashes some of the text to bring it in at a pacey two hours and ten minutes. The actors sit on benches at the sides of the stage, as if eager to get on with it.

Marc Tritschler's choral music with medieval influences is lovely but at odds with the modern approach.

This is a problematic play. Modern audiences squirm at the horrible insults rained down on the central Jewish character and at a Moroccan prince being deemed unsuitable husband material because of the colour of his skin.

Intelligent

But this production makes a difficult-to-like play highly watchable.

Findlay brings in a romantic triangle subtext, a passionate kiss revealing Venetians Antonio (Jamie Ballard) and Bassanio (Jacob Fortune-Lloyd) as lovers.

This explains Antonio's odd decision to borrow from Jewish moneylender Shylock, who he hates, in order to fund Bassanio's wooing of rich heiress Portia.

Patsy Ferran gives a standout performance as the fiercely intelligent Portia, who eventually realises the nature of her intended husband's friendship with the merchant.



Outsider — Makram J Khoury as Shylock, picture by Hugo Glendinning

As Shylock Israeli Palestinian actor Makram J Khoury, his accent marking him an outsider, radiates a wounded dignity. The scenes in which Venetians spit in his face are uncomfortable.

He remains a sympathetic character even as he sharpens his knife in readiness for vicious revenge, demanding his pound of flesh in forfeit for Antonio's debt.

Ballard's howls of terror as Antonio

awaits his fate are hair-raising. This scene of victim turned intimidator surely has resonance in today's Middle East. But it certainly doesn't make Shylock's final humiliation any easier to swallow.

The Merchant of Venice remains in repertoire until September 2 and the Royal Shakespeare Company production is screened live at cinemas on July 22.

ALBUM REVIEWS

By Leon Burakowski

THE Modfather roars back with his 12th solo album and Saturns Pattern is one of his best yet.

Like his musical peer Noel Gallagher on the High Flying Birds' album Chasing Yesterday, **Paul Weller** has gone back to go forward with a funky, bluesy new psychedelic sound, most evident on the quirky piano-led title track and the instant classic Pick It Up.

But perhaps most telling is the fact that Weller actually sounds upbeat, maybe it's a sense of well being suggested by the title I'm Where I Should Be. The album has some of his most summery sounds, Phoenix and These City Streets, since the heyday of The Style Council.

The former Jam man has still got a licence to thrill with distorted and scuffed blues cruncher White Sky and the belligerent Long Time.

Maybe it's something to do with a planetary alignment, but Weller's Saturns Pattern ranks alongside young band Django Django's Born Under Saturn as one of the best albums of the year so far.

The big time beckons for London band **The Vaccines** whose third album, **English Graffiti**, grabs you by the lapels from the moment it blasts out of the blocks with the swaggering surf rock of Handsome.

Singer Justin Hayward-Young pulls off a star turn on new single Dream Lover, a stadium-sized anthem, and they surprise with the lithe Minimal Attraction which brilliantly sounds like Fleetwood Mac meets The Strokes.

Is that an echo of The Jam on 20/20? A hint of Air on (All Afternoon) In Love? A touch of Depeche Mode on Denial? It is the sound of The Vaccines making an excellent eclectic album. That impression is confirmed by the yearning Maybe I Could Hold You and the punchy Gimme A Sign.



Going back to go forward — Paul Weller's psychedelic flavoured Saturns Pattern

The Vaccines will be in concert at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on November 17.

Will Young is back on the pop scene after four years in which he has concentrated on his stage career, including playing the Emcee in the touring production of Cabaret that came to Wolverhampton Grand.

He is now with Island Records, having come to the end of the multi-album deal that followed his Pop Idol triumph 13 years ago. The singer who famously gave Simon Cowell a telling off (they are still daggers drawn apparently) went on to create a string of slick, enjoyable and creditable pop albums.

Likeable recent single Love Revolution with its vintage Motown-like sound has paved the way for sixth studio album **85% Proof**, which draws on disco and funk for some inspiration but elsewhere goes for a stark melancholy, such as the impressive closer I Don't Need A Lover. The singer reckons it's his most honest album, drawing on his experiences including being bullied at

school. He pushes his vocals to straining point to express raw emotion.

Hot Chip hit a more reflective groove, ready to chill after a night in the club, on their sixth album **Why Make Sense?** but the hedonistic throb of the dancefloor is never far away. When Hot Chip do try something a little different, on White Wine And Fried Chicken and So Much Further To Go, the starker setting shows up the limited nature of Alexis Taylor's vocals.

Powerhouse Wolverhampton duo **God Damn** have unleashed a mighty beast of an album with their debut **Vultures**, an exhilarating blend of grinding hard rock guitars, crashing drums and sneering vocal attitude. Thom Edward (guitar/vocals) and Ash Weaver (drums) will be compared with Royal Blood but the Black Country outfit actually have a more varied and melodic sound with their heavy riffing infused with psychedelic flourishes. Highlights include the ferocious We Don't Like You and the epic nine-minute Skeleton.



Former Regis School classmates gather for the reunion at the Lindens, Tettenhall



Jennifer Ott, of Vienna and Richard Bond, San



Phil Amies, Jim Parrott and Katherine Fraser catch up on old times



Judy Lavender, Diane Winnall and Kathleen Hill



Laurence Foster of Dublin and Lynne Etherington catch up with current Kings CofE School head John Allin

Ex-pupils mark 60 years since school's formation

DOZENS of former pupils of Wolverhampton's landmark Regis School gathered to celebrate 60 years since they first walked through its doors.

The class of 1955 was the first to attend the Tettenhall Road school, one of the country's first ventures into the now defunct comprehensive schools system.

Former pupils met up at Linden House to reminisce about old times — with one man returning from San Francisco and another ex-student making the trip over from Vienna.

The reunion was organised by childhood friends Kath Hill, Diane Winnall and Judy Lavender, who decided to commemorate the anniversary following the success of a smaller gathering at the Dog and Gun pub in Tettenhall last year.

Ms Lavender, aged 71, from Tettenhall, said it was wonderful to see so many old friends back together.

"Most of the men here were in short trousers last time I saw them," she

MEMORY LANE

By Jessica Labhart

said. "We've all changed a bit as you'd expect, but you can still recognise a few of the old faces.

"It's nice that people have come from far and wide."

Some notable names have attended the school over the years, including Olympic sprinter Denise Lewis, England cricketer Vikram Solanki and England international rugby player Sam Doble. Another famous old boy, actor and director Laurence Foster, made the trip over from his home in Ireland to attend the gathering.

He said: "Being here today it's like we've all just come off the playground. "Back then we all bonded so quickly. It was a new school in a new system, but I have nothing but fond memories.

"The Regis was a place where we were encouraged to make the best of our abilities. We were allowed to have a voice, which wasn't always the case in other schools in those days."

The first batch of staff at the school

— which became Kings School in 1998 — were all hand-picked private school graduates who taught lessons decked out in their university gowns.

They were marshalled by much-loved headteacher Sir Godfrey Cretney, who was knighted in 1966 for his services to education.

Suzette Thompson, 71, attended the reunion with her friend Rose Tench, also 71, from Claregate.

Attention

Ms Thompson said: "Sir Godfrey was a wonderful man. He was small in stature but had an incredible presence. Everyone automatically stood to attention when he entered the room."

The reunion featured a display of pictures from the past to help jog attendees' memories, which was painstakingly compiled over a two week period by former student Phil Amies.

He also prepared a DVD presentation which was played during the event that documented the pupils' school trips around the UK and mainland Europe, which included visits to Derbyshire, Yorkshire, the Lake District as well as Paris.



One of the old pictures displayed at the reunion



One of the girls hockey teams on show at the reunion to mark 60 years of Regis School

fast the ticket

Manics mania

Rock giants
at Civic – Page 23



**Greg Davies
at Grand gala**

Page 23



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Friday, 7.30pm
Gatehouse, Stafford
 This show is based on Ruby's critically acclaimed book 'Sane New World' which helps us understand why we sabotage our sanity without thinking about it.
www.staffordgatehousetheatre.co.uk

The Beach Boys



Friday, 8pm
Barclaycard Arena, B'ham
 The Beach Boys have had a torrent of hit singles and sold tens of millions of albums. They continue to create and perform with the same imagination and style that marked their explosive debut.
 Visit www.barclaycardarena.co.uk

Elvis Costello



Sunday, 8pm
Symphony Hall, B'ham
 Following the success of his 2014 solo shows, Elvis Costello is back on the road with a new tour named Detour. His solo shows have been some of the most adventurous of his career.
 Visit www.thsh.co.uk

POP & ROCK

Joe McElderry
 Thu at 7.30pm, £15 - £20.90
 Prince Of Wales Centre,
 Cannock, WS11 1DE.
 Call 01543 578762

Maroon 5
 Sun at 7.30pm,
 £40.08 - £51.33
 Genting Arena, Birmingham,
 B40 1NT.
 Call 0121 780 4141

The Beach Boys
 Fri at 8pm, £44.40 - £48.94
 Barclaycard Arena,
 Birmingham, B1 2AA.
 Call 0121 780 4141

Manic Street Preachers – SOLD OUT
 Mon at 7pm, £35.75
 Wolverhampton Civic Hall,
 WV1 1RQ. Call 0870 320 7000

Mark Morriss (The Bluetones)
 Fri at 7.30pm, £7 - £9
 The Flapper, Kingston Row,
 Birmingham, B1 2NU.
 Call 0121 236 2421

Rocket
 Fri, Sat at 11pm, £5 - £10
 The Jam House, Birmingham,
 B31QU.
 Call 0121 200 3030

Spikes Free House
 Mon at 7.30pm,
 £17.50 - £18.50
 The Robin 2, Bilston,
 WV14 7LJ. Call 01902 401211

Supreme Queen
 Fri at 8pm, £9 - £19
 The River Rooms,
 Stourbridge, DY8 1JN.
 Call 01384 397177

Glambuster
 Sat at 8pm, £8
 The River Rooms, Stourbridge,
 DY8 1JN. Call 01384 397177

Elvis Costello
 Sun at 8pm, £37.50 - £42.50
 Symphony Hall, Birmingham,
 B1 2EA. Call 0121 780 3333

Coal Chamber
 Fri at 6.30pm, £22
 The Wulfrun,
 Wolverhampton, WV1 3HH.
 Call 01902 552106

Young Guns
 Wed at 7pm, £13.75
 The Wulfrun,
 Wolverhampton, WV1 3HH.
 Call 01902 552106

Midlands Metal Crusade 4
 Sat at 3pm, £8.25
 Wolverhampton Slade Rooms,
 WV1 1HP. Call 01902 552106

CASH tribute to Johnny Cash
 Fri at 7.30pm, £10 - £12
 The Robin 2, Bilston,
 WV14 7LJ. 01902 401211

I Q

Sat at 7.30pm,
 £17.50 - £19.50
 The Robin 2, Bilston,
 WV14 7LJ.
 Call 01902 401211

Laurence Jones Band
 Wed at 7.30pm, £10 - £12
 The Robin 2, Bilston,
 WV14 7LJ.
 Call 01902 401211

999 + The Lurkers
 Thu at 7.30pm, £10 - £12.50
 The Robin 2, Bilston,
 WV14 7LJ.
 Call 01902 401211

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 Stourbridge, DY8 3TB.
 Call 01384 374410

Sandpiper Folk Club Night
 Wed at 7.45pm, £2
 Pigot Arms, Pittingham,
 Wolverhampton, WV6 7BQ.
 Call 01902 700207

Common Folk: Singers' Night
 Thu at 8.30pm, £1
 Pelsall Cricket & Sports Club,
 Walsall, WS3 4BP.
 Call 07910 632695

Brewwood Acoustic Club
 Singers' Night
 Thu at 8pm, £2 (£1 singers)
 Brewwood Cricket Club,
 Brewwood, ST19 9HX.
 Call 01902 850422

A Celebration of John Denver
 Fri at 7.30pm, £18.50
 Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR.
 Call 01543 412121

Reverend Peyton's Big Damn Band
 Sun at 7.30pm, £10 - £12
 The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
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The Willows
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 £10.50 - £13
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 ST16 2LT.
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 WV1 1DE.
 Call 01902 573320

Hot Mikado
 Fri, Sat at 7.30pm, £12
 Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR.
 Call 01543 412121

Steve Brookstein
 Sat at 7.30pm, £17.50
 Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR.
 Call 01543 412121

Buddy

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 £10 - £17
 Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR.
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 O2 Academy Birmingham,
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 New Alexandra Theatre,
 Birmingham, B5 4DS.
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 2.30pm, £11.90 - £42.50
 Birmingham Hippodrome,
 B5 4TB.
 Call 0844 338 5000

Milkshake
 Fri at 1pm, 3.30pm,
 £10.75 - £45
 Palace Theatre, Redditch,
 B98 8AE.
 Call 01527 65203

Sex in Suburbia
 Sun at 7.30pm, £18 - £24.90
 Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
 WV1 1DE. Call 01902 573320

Back to Broadway
 Sat at 7.30pm,
 £17.75 - £18.75
 Palace Theatre, Redditch,
 B98 8AE.
 Call 01527 65203

The Elves & The Shoemaker
 Wed at 12.30pm, 2.15pm,
 £10.50
 Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
 WV1 1DE.
 Call 01902 573320

The Basil Brush Show
 Sun at 11am, 2.30pm,
 £12 - £45
 New Alexandra Theatre,
 Birmingham, B5 4DS.
 Call 0844 871 3011

Godspell In Concert
 Mon, Tue at 8pm, £19.50
 £23.90 - £35.90
 New Alexandra Theatre,
 Birmingham, B5 4DS.
 Call 0844 871 3011

The Rise And Fall of Little Voice
 Fri, Sat at 7.30pm, Sat at 2pm,
 £7 - £35
 Birmingham Repertory Theatre,
 B1 2EP. Call 0121 236 4455

The Pyramid Texts
 Fri, Sat at 8pm, £12
 Birmingham Repertory Theatre,
 B1 2EP.
 Call 0121 236 4455

First Stages – Statik
 Sat at 11.30am, 2pm, £9
 Birmingham Repertory Theatre,
 B1 2EP.
 Call 0121 236 4455

The Siege
 Thu at 8pm, £12
 Birmingham Repertory Theatre,
 B1 2EP.
 Call 0121 236 4455

Occasionally We Skype
 Fri, Sat at 7.30pm, £8 - £10
 Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton,
 WV1 1SE. Call 01902 321321

Mattress Mattress
 Wed at 1pm, Thu at 10am, 1pm,
 £5
 Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton,
 WV1 1SE.
 Call 01902 321321

Birmingham Cabaret Festival
 Fri, Sat at 8pm, £10
 The Old Joint Stock,
 Birmingham, B2 5NY.
 Call 0121 200 1892

Into the Woods
 Fri, Sat at 7.30pm, £12
 Prince Of Wales Centre,
 Cannock, WS11 1DE.
 Call 01543 578762

We'll Meet Again – Hits From The Blitz
 Wed at 2.30pm, £11 - £13
 Prince Of Wales Centre,
 Cannock, WS11 1DE.
 Call 01543 578762

Poetry Reading
 Mon at 7.30pm, £3 - £5
 Arena Theatre, Wolverhampton,
 WV1 1SE.
 Call 01902 321321

DANCE

Embraced Burlesque
 Sat at 8pm, £10
 Newhampton Arts Centre,
 Wolverhampton, WV1 4AN.
 Call 01902 572090

Madame Butterfly with Perpetuum Mobile
 Tue, Wed at 7.30pm,
 £10 - £27.50
 Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
 WV1 1DE. Call 01902 573320

Supreme Fabulettes
 Fri at 8pm, £19.50
 Birmingham Town Hall, B3 3DQ.
 Call 0121 780 3333

COMEDY

Jimmy Carr: Funny Business
 Sat at 8pm, £25 - £28.90
 Symphony Hall, Birmingham,
 B1 2EA.
 Call 0121 780 3333

Ruby Wax – Sane New World
 Fri at 7.30pm,
 £15.50 - £17.50
 Stafford Gatehouse Theatre,
 ST16 2LT.
 Call 01785 254653

Alexei Sayle: Listen With Alexei
 Sat at 8pm, £11 - £13
 mac, Cannon Hill Park,
 Birmingham, B12 9QH.
 Call 0121 446 3232

Lucy Beaumont
 Fri at 8pm, £12
 Stafford Gatehouse Theatre,
 ST16 2LT. 01785 254653

OTHER EVENTS

The Quiz
 Tue at 7.30pm, Free
 Katie Fitzgerald's, Wollaston,
 Stourbridge, DY8 3TB.
 Call 01384 374410

Horrible Histories!
 Fri, Sat, Sun at 10am, Free
 Warwick Castle,
 Warwick, CV34 4QU.
 Call 01926 495421

Open Mic Night
 Mon at 8.30pm, Free
 Katie Fitzgerald's, Wollaston,
 Stourbridge, DY8 3TB.
 Call 01384 374410

Family History Buddy
 Wed at 9.30am - 1pm, 1.45pm - 5pm, Free
 Walsall Local History Centre,
 WS2 7AS. Call 01922 721305

1600s Gardening Group
 Tue at 10am - 1pm, Free
 The Oak House Museum,
 West Bromwich, B70 8HJ.
 Call 0121 553 0759

Coffee Mornings
 Fri, Sat, Thu at 2pm - 5pm,
 £2
 Wednesbury Museum &
 Art Gallery, WS10 7DF.
 Call 0121 556 0683

Guitar Group Sessions
 Sat at 2pm, £5
 Light House, Fryer Street,
 Wolverhampton,
 WV1 1HT. Call 01902 716055

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Bible according to the Manics



Manic Street Preachers — drummer Sean Moore, bassist Nicky Wire and singer-guitarist James Dean Bradfield

AFTER Welsh rockers The Manic Street Preachers announced they would be playing special shows celebrating the 20th anniversary of their third album, *The Holy Bible*, the tickets sold out in minutes.

That was a milestone release for the band, and the last album featuring rhythm guitarist and lyricist Richey Edwards, who disappeared five months after the LP came out.

The Manics have sold out all those

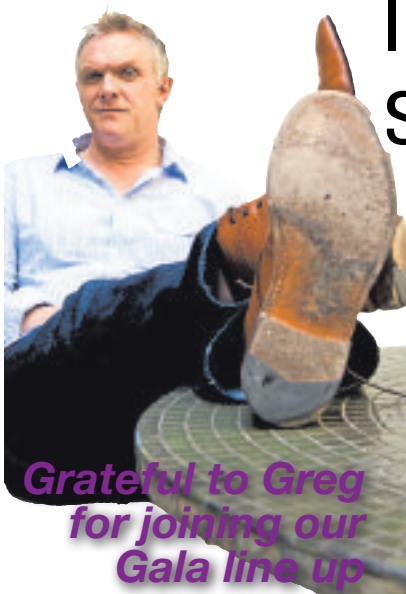
dates including Wolverhampton Civic Hall on Monday, after releasing a deluxe box set of *The Holy Bible* including BBC recordings of their last gigs with Richey Edwards.

James Dean Bradfield, Nicky Wire and Sean Moore have released two new albums, *Rewind The Film* and *Puturology*, in little over a year. They also sold out the Civic last year, treating fans to a storming concert.

Other upcoming highlights include

Brandon Flowers of The Killers at the O2 Academy in Birmingham tonight (sold out), and The Beach Boys at the Barclaycard Arena tomorrow.

On Sunday LA's Maroon 5 will have Moves Like Jagger at the Genting Arena (NEC), while the tough get going for Billy Ocean at Birmingham Town Hall (sold out), Elvis Costello is at Birmingham Symphony Hall and Indiana's Reverend Peyton's Big Damn Band play Bilston's Robin 2.



Inbetweeners star tops bill

STAND-UP comedian and Inbetweeners star Greg Davies will top the bill at this year's Hilarity Charity Gala, which will be a rare chance to catch the Shropshire comic in live action as he is currently busy making new TV show *Taskmaster*.

The Man Down star is being joined by Canadian comedienne Katherine Ryan in the line up for the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre show on Monday, June 8.

Hosted by the city's Central Youth Theatre, the gala was first held last year in a bid to raise badly-needed funds for the group in the wake of cuts.

It is returning with the show organised by former youth theatre member Tom Parry, one third of BBC3 sketch group Pappy's, who will also be appearing.

He also promises a special surprise guest as part of the gala which will be hosted again by Perrier award winner Daniel Kitson.

Also on the bill is Welsh comic Elis James and comedy duo Lazy Susan featuring former youth theatre member Celeste Dring.

Mr Parry said: "We are really grateful to Greg Davies for joining our line up. He hasn't appeared on stage for 18 months, so we are sure there are plenty of comedy fans out there who will be overjoyed to get the opportunity to see him perform live."

Tickets are on sale at the Grand Theatre box office on 01902 429212 priced at £21/£16 concessions.

Curious incident is at the Hippodrome

THE National Theatre's acclaimed and innovative production of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, about a teenaged boy with autism who turns detective after a pet is killed, is at Birmingham Hippodrome this week, staged until Saturday, June 6.

The Reduced Shakespeare Company bring *The Complete History of Comedy (Abridged)* to Wolverhampton Grand tonight and Claire Sweeney stars in new comedy about the dating game, *Sex In Suburbia*, on Sunday. Other one-nighters at the Grand include *The Blues Brothers Experience* tomorrow and Stephen Triffitt in Frankly Sinatra on Saturday.

Siege in Bethlehem inspires play at Rep

BIRMINGHAM Repertory Theatre is hosting hard-hitting drama at its small venue The Door.

The Pyramid Texts is a monologue from an ageing boxer, written by Geoff Thompson and performed by Christopher Fairbank until Saturday. The Siege, in Arabic and English with subtitles, by The Freedom Theatre of Palestine is staged from June 4 to 6. It is drawn from an incident in May 2002 when armed men sought sanctuary from the Israeli Army in the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem. Caught up in the siege were hundreds of priests, nuns and tourists. Call the box office on 0121 236 4455

Ballet version of doomed love affair

AWARD-WINNING Northern Ballet are coming to Wolverhampton to perform three productions at the Grand Theatre.

On Tuesday and Wednesday they stage *Madame Butterfly* in a double bill with *Perpetuum Mobile*. The former is the story of a doomed love affair, music by Puccini and choreographed by the company's artistic director David Nixon OBE. The latter choreographed by Christopher Hampson, of Scottish Ballet, is an athletic 17-minute piece to music by Bach. On Wednesday at 12.30 and 2.15pm they perform 40-minute children's ballet *Elves and the Shoemaker*. Call the box office on 01902 429212.

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Masterpiece from an old master — Rembrandt's The Night Watch at the Rijksmuseum



Exploring Vincent Van Gogh's art in Amsterdam



Bloemenmarkt — the floating market on the Singel canal in the Dutch capital



Amsterdam has more waterways than Brum or Venice

It's still A'dam fine city

IT IS Birmingham's boast that it has more canals than Venice, 35 miles' worth compared with 26.

However, Amsterdam beats them both put together with 65 miles of waterways coiled around the centre of the Dutch capital

Walking the streets flanking those canals is one of the great pleasures of a city break to Amsterdam. The grand trio of canals the Herengracht, Keizergracht and Prinsengracht have tall thin gabled buildings, most dating from Holland's golden age in the 17th century when these were the homes and warehouses of rich merchants.

You can spend days wandering these watery thoroughfares, popping into cosy dark-wood cafes, trying nibbles at the ubiquitous cheese shops, rooting through the vintage clothes shops and getting the odd herbal whiff from the many coffee shops (or should we call them joints).

When the sun goes down the night life and thriving restaurant scene kicks in.

By Leon Burakowski

That's the perfect time to sip a Dutch gin (genever) at bars such as the atmospheric Admiraal, where the furniture is made out of old barrels.

Foodwise, Amsterdam has the lot, having been the port of a mighty trading nation. There are excellent Italian eateries, Indonesian and Thai places and an infeasible number of sugar-coated waffle shops. For the ultimate Dutch street food — besides a slippery herring — go to Vlaams Friteshuis Vleminkx. Only open in the afternoon, this hatch in the wall sells piping hot cones of delicious frites (chips), available with various tangy mayonnaises.

The Red Light District, located between tacky central main drag Damrak and Chinatown, can be avoided if you are offended by the women in the windows and the X-rated shops.

Places that you shouldn't miss include the floating flower market Bloemenmarkt on the Singel canal, near to the main shop-

ping street of Kalverstraat. When you tire of dodging cyclists, the enclosed haven-like Begijnhof is found through a modest door on Spui square. This former home for religious women includes the city's oldest buildings and the historic English Reformed Church.

Art lovers should head for Museumplein for the city's greatest galleries. The Van Gogh Museum includes hundreds of works by the tragic genius, including double sided works from when the hard-up artist could not afford to use only one side of a canvas. His swirling colourful art remains magical and the museum does a great job of walking visitors through his too-short life.

Iconic

The revamped and restored Rijksmuseum is a work of art in itself, a hugely impressive building that contains iconic works by Dutch greats Rembrandt and Vermeer.

Both museums are always very busy and should be booked in advance online to avoid queues, as should the city's most popular — and most sobering — attraction, the Anne

Frank House. This hiding place for Jewish families during the Second World War, including the teenage girl whose diary went on to touch the hearts of millions, is tiny and timed tickets help limit crowding. In Anne's room, her cut-out pictures of movie stars are still on the walls.

The excellent museum beside the secret annexe stresses that Anne was one victim among millions. Despite the queues and crowds, it should not be missed.

Major savings can be made on many admissions and public transport (including trams) by purchasing an I Amsterdam City Card. See www.iamsterdam.com for details.

For reading, I recommend **Amsterdam: A History of the World's Most Liberal City** by Russell Shorto; the story of the architectural rebirth of the Rijksmuseum is told in the handsomely illustrated **Rijksmuseum: The Building, the Collection and the Outdoor Gallery** by Cees de Jong & Patrick Spijkerman; **The Miniaturist** by Jessie Burton is an atmospheric novel set during Amsterdam's golden age.

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MOTD Live: The FA Cup BBC1, 5.15pm
Arsenal v Aston Villa (Kick-off 5.30pm). Gary Lineker presents coverage of the final from Wembley Stadium, where the Gunners will be trying to retain the title they won last year, and the Villans will aim to lift this trophy for the first time since 1957. Tim Sherwood has revitalised the Villa side since taking over from Paul Lambert back in February, most noticeably by placing an emphasis on the attacking side of the game, which in turn has led to star striker Christian Benteke recapturing the type of form that garnered much acclaim prior to his long-term absence through injury. Subsequent programmes are subject to change

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** The Box. (R) **12.00** BBC News: Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **1.00** Gary Lineker on the Road to FA Cup Glory. (R) **2.05** FA Cup TOTP2. **2.30** Pointless Celebrities. (R) **3.25** FA Cup: The Road to Wembley. (R) **3.55** MOTD Live: FA Cup Final Build-Up. A look ahead to the 134th staging of the showpiece encounter. **5.15** MOTD Live: The FA Cup. Arsenal v Aston Villa (Kick-off 5.30pm). **7.50** BBC News. **8.00** Regional Programme. **8.05** The National Lottery: Who Dares Wins. Following last week's Eurovision special, Nick Knowles returns with the game show in which two pairs of complete strangers battle it out by listing as much as they know about a given subject. The first couple to win two rounds get to play for £50,000 and each time the champions defeat a new set of opponents their winnings mount up. Includes the live Lotto and Thunderball draws, presented by Gabby Roslin. **8.55** Casualty. Marcus, a young, talented scout, gets mixed up with the wrong crowd and ends up robbing an arcade run by the unscrupulous proprietor Keong. When the situation escalates, a skate-shop owner tries to stop the incident coming to a tragic end. Meanwhile, in the Emergency Department, Charlie worries about Louis's wellbeing following his return from Romania, and Lily helps a young woman – who happens to be one of Keong's employees – escape a difficult situation involving a wager placed on her ailing mother's odds of survival by her decidedly dodgy boss. **9.45** The John Bishop Show. New series. An evening of entertainment at the Hackney Empire theatre in London, featuring performances by Paul Weller, Beadyman, Trevor Noah, James Acaster and Felicity Ward. **10.30** BBC News: Weather. **10.50** MOTD: FA Cup Highlights. Arsenal v Aston Villa. Highlights of the final at Wembley Stadium; National Lottery Update. **11.25** Film: Shanghai Noon. (2000) Comedy Western, starring Jackie Chan and Owen Wilson. **1.10** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.15**

BBC2

6.05 Film: Battle Cry. (1955) **8.30** FA Cup Rewind: Classic Finals. **9.30** MOTD Kickabout: FA Cup Final. **10.00** FA Cup's 50 Greatest Moments. (R) **12.00** Alex Polizzi: Chefs on Trial. (R) **1.00** James Martin's Food Map of Britain. (R) **1.10** Hitch. (R) **2.10** Living Famously. (R) **3.10** Film: Rear Window. (1954) Hitchcock thriller, starring James Stewart. **5.00** Flog It! (R) **6.00** Gardeners' World. Joe Swift meets a florist in Surrey who has perfected the art of kokedama – a modern take on the hanging basket. Plus, a visit to South Africa to learn more about the Cape primrose. (R) **6.30** Britain's Greatest Generation. A look at individuals who played their part in creating a more culturally diverse post-war Britain, including Earl Cameron, George Montague and Brian Rix. Last in the series. (R) **7.30** Edwardian Farm. Alex Langlands, Peter Ginn and Ruth Goodman try to take Morwellham Quay in Devon back to its Edwardian heyday, beginning by setting up home in a cottage. (R) **8.30** Dad's Army. Mainwaring and his platoon have their hands full with two German prisoners and the arrival of a suspicious Polish captain. Comedy, starring Arthur Lowe and John Le Mesurier. (R) **9.00** Film: Quartet. (2012) Three former opera singers prepare for their annual concert to mark Verdi's birthday and raise funds for their retirement home. However, this year, a famous diva has joined the group, and her history with the others threatens the performance. Comedy drama, directed by Dustin Hoffman and starring Maggie Smith, Billy Connolly, Tom Courtenay, Pauline Collins and Michael Gambon. **10.35** The Many Faces of Dame Judi Dench. Charting the Oscar-winning actress's rise to fame, including a clip of an early TV appearance in Z Cars, and exploring how she achieved success on the small screen and in Hollywood. (R) **11.35** Film: The Shipping News. (2001) Drama, starring Kevin Spacey, Julianne Moore and Judi Dench. **1.20** Film: Comfort and Joy. (1984) **3.00**

ITV

6.00 CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.25** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Canimals. (R) **7.15** Sooty. (R) **7.30** Super 4. (R) **7.45** Nerds & Monsters. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **10.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.30** ITV News: Weather. **12.40** Doc Martin. (R) **1.40** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **2.40** Film: Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. (2002) Fantasy adventure sequel, starring Daniel Radcliffe. **5.40** You've Been Framed! (R) **6.05** Regional Programme: Weather. **6.15** ITV News: Weather. **6.30** The Magic Show Story. Stephen Mulhern, himself an active member of the Magic Circle, embarks on an exploration of 60 years of illusions as he celebrates the art of the TV magician. Along the way, he speaks to performers past and present, including Darcy Oake, Paul Daniels, Anita Harris and Penn and Teller, he recalls headline-grabbing stunts that captured the public's imagination, including Dynamo levitating above London's Shard, and David Blaine's ice prison. He also reveals how ground-breaking performers such as David Nixon and Tommy Cooper were among the first to bring magic to the masses via the medium of TV, and investigates how the typical illusionist has transformed from the tuxedoed man pulling a rabbit from his hat, into the hip, young street magicians now finding fame in a new millennium. **7.30** Ninja Warrior UK. The grand final of the contest, in which the most successful contestants must ascend Mount Midoriyama one last time before the UK's first Ninja Warrior is named. Last in the series. **8.30** Film: The Amazing Spider-Man. (2012) Premiere. Superhero adventure reboot, starring Andrew Garfield and Rhys Ifans. **11.10** ITV News: Weather. **11.25** Film: TT: Closer to the Edge. (2011) Documentary following the annual Tourist Trophy motorcycle race held on the Isle of Man, which carries a reputation for danger, with riders frequently being killed. **1.15** Jackpot247. **3.00** The Jeremy Kyle

CHANNEL 4

6.15 How I Met Your Mother. (R) **6.40** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **7.05** Transylvania Ultra Marathon. **7.30** FIM Superbike World Championship. **8.00** The Morning Line. **9.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **9.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **10.00** Frasier. (R) **10.30** Frasier. (R) **11.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.25** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD. (R) **1.25** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Haydock Park, York and Newmarket. **4.15** Film: Pride and Prejudice. (2005) Period drama, starring Keira Knightley. **6.40** Channel 4 News. **7.00** Inside Jaguar: Making a Million Pound Car. Mark Evans follows the creation of the Lightweight E-type, the manufacturer's most expensive car ever, finding out exactly what goes into building a car fit for a millionaire. Plans were made for 18 of the cars to be built back in 1963, but only 12 were ever produced – and now another six are being put together by specialist engineers to finally finish the project. However, the presenter discovers that not everyone is happy with the situation. (R) **8.00** Walking Through History: Wigan Pier. Tony Robinson embarks on a topographical exploration of industrial engineering along the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, and delves into the story of its chaotic construction. (R) **9.00** Film: The Woman in Black. (2012) A lawyer tormented by the death of his wife is sent to a remote village to put deceased client Alice Drablow's affairs in order. The locals are suspicious of outsiders and determined to keep the area's tragic history a secret, and the late Mrs Drablow's isolated house seems to be haunted by a vengeful spirit that seems hell-bent on redressing a decades-past grievance. Horror based on Susan Hill's novel, with Daniel Radcliffe and Ciaran Hinds. **10.55** Film: The X-Files: I Want to Believe. (2008) Paranormal investigators Mulder and Scully come out of hiding to help the FBI investigate sinister experiments. Sci-fi thriller sequel, with David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson. **1.00** Jimmy Carr: Telling Jokes. (R) **1.55** Hollyoaks. (R) **4.05** Grand Designs Australia. (R) **5.00** Phil: Secret Agent

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **10.35** Chinese Food in Minutes. **10.50** The Hotel Inspector: Abroad. (R) **11.50** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **12.45** Film: Corrina, Corrina. (1994) Family drama set in the 1950s, starring Whoopi Goldberg. **3.00** Film: Columbo: Murder, Smoke and Shadows. (1989) Crime drama, starring Peter Falk. **5.05** Film: Columbo: Dagger of the Mind. (1972) Detective drama, starring Peter Falk and Honor Blackman. **6.50** 5 News Weekend. **7.00** Cricket on 5. England v New Zealand. Highlights of the second day in the second Test of the two-match series, which takes place at Headingley, England have been on a downward spiral in this format of the game after reaching the summit of the ICC Test rankings several years ago, and entered this series as the fifth-ranked nation, which is in contrast to New Zealand, who recently rose to third and were looking to continue their good form. Presented by Mark Nicholas, who also commentates alongside Michael Vaughan, Geoffrey Boycott and Simon Hughes. **8.00** Pets Make You Laugh Out Loud. Dave Spikay and Zoe Lyons introduce another compilation of internet videos, with this edition featuring silly-crazy hamsters, tortoises with attitude problems, foul-mouthed parrots and a water-skiing squirrel. There are also clips of a pet pig that is an Instagram star, and a cat who caused an online sensation when its owner discovered its nose worked as a remote control for the bedside lamp. (R) **9.00** Big Brother: Timebomb. Friday's highlights, including housemates' reactions to the latest eviction, revealing how the departure has affected the remaining contestants – and whether the outcome of the public vote has anyone else fearing for their place in the competition. **10.00** Most Shocking Celebrity Moments 2014. Countdown of the biggest showbusiness stories and scandals of the year, from Solange Knowles attacking Jay-Z in a lift to Russell Brand's attempt to start a revolution. (R) **12.55** SuperCasino. **3.10** Big Brother: Timebomb. (R) **4.00** Furious & Funny:

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Top Gear. **8.00** FA Cup's 50 Greatest Moments **10.00** Happy Valley **11.00** Family Guy **1.15** Murder in Successville **1.45** Nick Helm's Heavy Entertainment **2.15** Festivals, Sex & Suspicious Parents **3.15** Russell Howard's Good News **3.45** In Deep **4.00** Close
BBC Four
7.00 Blue Note: A Story of Modern Jazz **8.30** Jazz 625: The Dave Brubeck Quartet **9.00** 1964 **11.00** Kenny Rogers: Cards on the Table **12.00** Country Queens at the BBC **1.00** Top of the Pops: 1980 **1.40** Bullseyes and Beer – When Darts Hit Britain: Timeshift **2.40** Timeshift: The Golden Age of Coach Travel **3.40** Close
ITV2
11.55 Film: The Little Vampire (2000) **1.50** Mr Bean **2.55** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **3.20** Britain's Got Talent **4.55** Britain's Got Talent Results **5.25** Film: Jurassic Park (1993) **8.00** Film: Something Borrowed (2011) **10.15** Film: Troy (2004) **1.25** The Keith Lemon Sketch Show **1.55** Crazy Beaches **2.40** The Hot Desk: Kelly Clarkson **2.50** Teleshopping **5.50** ITV2
ITV3
12.05 Film: Housesitter (1992) **2.10** Wycliffe **3.15** Film: Columbo: Double Exposure (1973) **4.50** Lewis **6.55** Rosemary & Thyme **8.00** Foyle's War **10.00** Inspector Wexford **11.40** Wire in the Blood **12.45** Ghostboat **2.05** ITV3
ITV4
9.00 Film: The Dead Poet (1988) Action thriller sequel, starring Clint Eastwood. **10.55** Premiership Rugby Union **11.55** Film: Mortal Kombat (1995) **2.00** Minder **3.00** Teleshopping
E4
11.00 New Girl **12.00** Melissa & Joey **1.00** The Goldbergs **2.00** How I Met Your Mother **3.00** Film: 17 Again (2009) **5.00** Made in Chelsea **6.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: Haywire (2011) **10.50** Gogglebox **12.55** The Big Bang Theory **2.25** 2 Broke Girls **2.50** How I Met Your Mother **3.30** Rules of Engagement **4.20** New Girl **4.45** Melissa & Joey **5.10** Make It or Break It
Film4
11.00 Marmaduke (2010) **1.00** Home Alone 3 (1997) **3.05** Ice Age (2002) **4.40** Mirror Mirror (2012) **6.50** Mission: Impossible (1996) **9.00** Star Trek (2009) **11.30** Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance (2011) **1.20** No Country for Old Men

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CHOICE



Antiques Roadshow BBC1, 8pm
Fiona Bruce and the team visit Ashton Court in Bristol, where they examine a piece of street art by Banksy in a local doorway. Expert Rupert Maas reveals the difficulty of valuing graffiti by an artist whose identity is a closely guarded secret. Other finds include a 19th-century automaton that can smoke a cigarette, a nautilus shell engraved with a picture of the city's suspension bridge, a globe clock that provides a surprise to its owner and a posset pot that may have origins closer to home than expected.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast: 8.25 MOTD: FA Cup Highlights. (R) **9.00 The Andrew Marr Show: 10.00 The Big Questions: 11.00 Sunday Politics: 12.15 Bargain Hunt: (R) 1.00 BBC News: Weather: 1.15 VE Day 70: A Party to Remember: (R) 3.10 Homes Under the Hammer: (R) 3.40 Flog It! (R) 4.25 Regional Programme: 4.55 Points of View: 5.10 Songs of Praise: 5.45 Pointless Celebrities: (R) **6.35 BBC News: 6.50 Regional Programme: 7.00 Countryfile.** The team visits the Channel Islands, where Matt Baker investigates the legacy of naturalist Gerald Durrell. Ellie Harrison helps out with an unusual habitat restoration on the site of an old holiday camp and discovers Guernsey's history of tomato growing. John Craven visits a cream dairy on Sark, Charlotte Smith finds out about a resilient weed, and Adam Henson encounters woolly pigs. Including Weather for the Week Ahead.**

BBC2

6.00 Homes Under the Hammer: (R) 6.30 FA Cup Rewind: Classic Finals: 7.30 Countryfile: (R) 8.30 Gardeners' World: (R) 9.00 The Beechgrove Garden: 9.30 Saturday Kitchen Best Bites: 11.00 Mary Berry's Absolute Favourites: (R) 11.30 Live Rowing: 1.50 Athletics: 2.50 Live Triathlon: The ITU World Triathlon Series meeting from Hyde Park, London. **6.00 Hotel India. The Taj Mahal Palace's deputy general manager Parveen oversees Christie's first-ever auction of Indian art in its country of origin – and the hope is that Mumbai's super-rich will break a world sales record. Concierge Satish attends to regular guests Peter and Suzie Noble, who have shipped their vintage Lanchester car from Essex to tour the subcontinent, while musician and composer Anoushka Shankar returns to the hotel where her father Ravi first taught George Harrison of the Beatles to play the sitar. (R) **7.00 A Very British Airline.** Operations manager Kevin Mackenzie discusses the challenges of working out of Heathrow and two trainee airline pilots reach the end of their course. Last in the series. (R) **8.00 Demolition: The Wrecking Crew.** A Hull estate is evacuated so the city's tallest building can be demolished, and Debbie Burns takes on a £750million renovation project at Birmingham New Street. Last in the series. **9.00 Armada – 12 Days to Save England.** Dan Snow tells the story of the naval battle in 1588 that could have led to the conquest of Britain, and examines how the prospect of invasion affected Elizabeth I's royal court. **10.00 Rev.** Alex gives birth in dramatic circumstances, and Adam teams up with a local imam to help save a playground. Comedy, starring Tom Hollander and Olivia Colman. (R) **10.30 Sir Stanley Matthews: The Wizard of Wembley.** Documentary about the 1953 FA Cup Final between Blackpool and Bolton Wanderers, in which Stanley Matthews sealed his reputation as one of England's greatest ever footballers. **11.00 Film: Frost/Nixon.** (2008) Drama, starring Frank Langella. **12.55 Sign Zone: Countryfile.** (R) **1.50****

ITV

6.00 CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.25 Pat & Stan.** (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Animals. (R) **7.15 Sooty.** (R) **7.30** Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Judge Rinder. (R) **10.25** Judge Rinder. (R) **11.25** Judge Rinder. (R) **12.25** ITV News: Weather. **12.40** The Unforgettable Frankie Howard. (R) **1.10** Film: Junior. (1994) Comedy, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger. **3.15** Midsomer Murders. (R) **5.15** Ninja Warrior UK. (R) **6.15** Regional Programme: Weather. **6.30** ITV News: Weather. **6.40** Celebrity Squares. Life's Top Short star Warwick Davis hosts a revival of the classic game show originally presented by Bob Monkhouse. Jimmy Carr is in the centre square, with Tracy-Ann Oberman, Matt Forde, Sarah-Jane Crawford, Marek Larwood, Joe Swash and Kerry Godliman joining regulars Tim Vine and Joe Wilkinson in the celebrity grid this week. **7.30** Britain's Got Talent Final. Ant and Dec host the conclusion of this year's talent search, as the last few acts to make it through the previous week's five semi-finals perform once more for judges Simon Cowell, Amanda Holden, David Walliams and Alesha Dixon. It's then over to the British public, as viewers' votes decide who should be this year's champion, winning a prize of £250,000 and a chance to perform in this year's Royal Variety Show. Last in the series. **10.00** ITV News: Weather. **10.15** The Nation's Favourite Queen Song. The legendary rock band's 20 greatest hits, as decided by the public, featuring interviews with Brian May, Roger Taylor and celebrity fans. Matt Lucas narrates. (R) **11.40** Premiership Rugby Union. Mark Durdin-Smith is joined by David Flatman to present highlights of the Premiership final from Twickenham, where this year's champions were decided. **12.30** The Store. Home shopping. **2.30** Motorsport UK. High-speed coverage from around the country. **3.20** TV Nightscreen. Text-based information service. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. The host invites guests to air their differences

CHANNEL 4

6.20 How I Met Your Mother. (R) **6.45** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **7.10** Caterham Motorsport. **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **9.50** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R) **1.35** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **2.25** Film: Tooth Fairy. (2010) Family comedy, starring Dwayne Johnson. **4.30** Location. Location. Location. (R) **5.30** A Place in the Sun: Home or Away. **6.30** Channel 4 News. **7.00** Speed with Guy Martin. Speed freak Guy Martin embarks on a mission to fly using muscle power alone, by building the world's fastest human-powered aircraft. He heads to Southampton University where, in 1961, Derek Piggott became the first man to fly his own power. Guy teams up with a group of engineers from the same university to build a plane that Guy will ride like a bicycle – will he manage to fly into the record books? (R) **8.00** For the Love of Cars. Philip and Ant take a 100-mile road trip from Bristol to the Devonshire coast in a VW camper van, and reveal how motoring was revolutionised by the air-cooled engine used in this vehicle and several other iconic cars. Along the way, they meet a car collector who owns seven Citroën 2CVs and come to the aid of a driver who wants their help restoring his treasured VW Beetle so it can be sold at auction. **9.00** Film: Shutter Island. (2010) Premiere. A US marshal, traumatised by his past, heads to a hospital for the criminally insane on a remote island to investigate the disappearance of a woman who murdered her children. As the case unfolds, he begins to suspect the doctors are hiding something – and that a grisly fate awaits all the patients on a sinister ward. Martin Scorsese's mystery thriller, starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Mark Ruffalo and Ben Kingsley. **11.40** Film: Fracture. (2007) A man shoots his wife, confesses to the crime, and represents himself in court, where he demystifies the prosecution's case. Thriller, starring Anthony Hopkins. **1.40** Alan Carr: Chatty Man. (R) **2.35** Come Dine with Me. (R) **4.40** Phil: Secret

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Pappa Pig. **6.05** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **6.20** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **6.35** Pip Ahoy! (R) **6.45** The Mr Men Show. (R) **6.55** Mio Mao. (R) **7.00** Chloe's Closet. (R) **7.15** Roodbarb and Custard Top. (R) **7.20** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.35** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.45** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **7.50** Little Princess. (R) **8.05** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **8.15** Oily the Little White Van. (R) **8.20** Zack and Quack. (R) **8.30** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.45** Jelly Jamm. (R) **9.00** LazyTown. (R) **9.30** Dora and Diego. (R) **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. **10.35** Access. **10.45** Ultimate Police Interceptors. (R) **11.45** Ultimate Police Interceptors. (R) **12.45** Ultimate Police Interceptors. (R) **1.45** Film: See Spot Run. (2001) Comedy, starring David Arquette. **3.40** Film: Land of the Lost. (2009) Comedy adventure, starring Will Ferrell. **5.25** Film: Robin Hood. (1973) Disney animation, with the voices of Terry-Thomas and Peter Ustinov. **7.00** Cricket on 5. England v New Zealand. Highlights of the third day in the second Test of the two-match series, which takes place at Headingley, Yorkshire opener Adam Lyth will be hoping to put in a good performance in front of his home crowd after making his England debut in the First Test, while his county teammates Gary Ballance and Joe Root will also look to impress. Presented by Mark Nicholas, who also commentates alongside Michael Vaughan, Geoffrey Boycott and Simon Hughes. **8.00** Film: Joe Kidd. (1972) A bounty hunter is asked to capture a Mexican rebel, and accepts the job after the outlaw's men attack his own ranch. But when he witnesses the cruel methods used by his employer, he resolves to bring the fugitive to a fair trial rather than let him face rough justice. Western, starring Clint Eastwood, Robert Duvall and John Saxon. Edited for language and violence. **9.50** 5 News Weekend. **10.00** Big Brother: Timebomb. Daily round-up of highlights, featuring the latest tasks, games, arguments, diary room visits and chit-chat in the aftermath of the recent eviction. **11.00** Film: In Time. (2011) Sci-fi thriller, with Justin Timberlake. **1.05** SuperCasino. **3.10** Gotham. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Top Gear. **8.05** Don't Tell the Bride. **9.00** Film: Leave to Remain (2013)
10.30 Family Guy. **11.15** American Dad!
11.35 Family Guy. **12.00** Murder in Successville. **12.30** Festivals, Sex & Suspicious Parents. **1.30** Russell Howard's Good News. **2.00** Nick Helm's Heavy Entertainment. **2.30** Murder in Successville. **3.00** Don't Tell the Bride. **4.00** Close
BBC Four
7.00 Benjamin Britten on Camera. **8.00** Nature's Great Events. **10.00** Metamorphosis – The Science of Change. **11.00** BB King – The Life of Riley. **12.40** When Pop Ruled My Life: The Fans' Story. **1.40** I'm in a Boy Band! **2.40** Jazz Divas Gold. **3.40** Close
ITV2
11.55 Take Me Out. **1.10** Take Me Out – The Gossip. **1.50** Film: Kangaroo Jack (2003). **3.35** Film: Cats & Dogs (2001). **5.20** Film: Freaky Friday (2003). **7.25** Film: The Lost World: Jurassic Park (1997). **10.00** Britain's Got More Talent (2001). **10.45** The Fast and the Furious (2001). **1.10** Crazy Beaches. **1.35** Viral TV. **2.10** Teleshopping. **5.40** ITV2 Nightscreen
ITV3
12.25 Inspector Morse. **2.40** Film: The Nun's Story (1959). **5.40** Inspector Mors. **8.00** Lewis. **10.00** A Touch of Frost. **12.11** Film: The Pianist (2002). **2.50** Ghostboat. **4.00** ITV3 Nightscreen. **4.05** Emmertale
ITV4
9.00 Cycling: Tour Series. **10.00** Film: Mars Attacks! (1996). **12.10** Film: Village of the Damned (1995). **2.15** Nitro Circus. **2.40** Movies Now. **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen. **3.00** Teleshopping
E4
12.00 Made in Chelsea. **1.00** New Girl. **2.00** How I Met Your Mother. **3.00** The Goldbergs. **4.00** The Big Bang Theory. **5.00** Film: Cleeseless (1995). **6.55** The Big Bang Theory. **10.00** Gogglebox. **12.05** Th Big Bang Theory. **1.30** Brooklyn Nine-Nine. **2.00** Rude Tube. **2.55** Virtually Famous. **3.30** The Cleveland Show. **3.50** Hollyoaks
Film4
11.00 Warlords of Atlantis (1978). **1.00** First Daughter (2004). **3.10** A Monster in Paris (2011). **5.05** The Spiderwick Chronicles (2008). **6.55** Terminal Velocity (1994). **9.00** Byzantium (2012) Vampire horror, with Gemma Arterton and Saoirse Ronan. **11.20** Shell. **12.00** Drama, starring Chloe Pirrie. **1.10** The General's

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Carry On Cruising, ITV, 11.40pm
The captain of a cruise ship bound for the Mediterranean is less than impressed when five of his regular shipmates are replaced at the last minute. Despite their best efforts to earn his respect and an eagerness to please, the new recruits seem doomed to cause chaos whatever they do. Comedy, starring Sid James, Kenneth Williams, Liz Fraser and Kenneth Connor. (1962)

TUESDAY
White Oleander, BBC1, 11.35pm
A 15-year-old girl's happy life is thrown into upheaval when her mother is sentenced to life imprisonment for murdering her lover. Astrid spends the rest of her adolescence drifting from one foster home to another, but her mother remains a constant influence in her life. Drama based on Janet Fitch's novel, starring Alison Lohman, Michelle Pfeiffer, Renee Zellweger, Robin Wright and Billy Connolly. (2002)



Eagle Eye, Wednesday, BBC1, 11.15pm

WEDNESDAY
Eagle Eye, BBC1, 11.15pm
Two strangers find themselves on the run from the authorities when they receive mysterious phone calls informing them their lives are in danger. They are forced to follow the instructions of a woman who is tracking their every move, while at the same time trying to discover who is behind the conspiracy. Thriller, starring Shia LaBeouf, Michelle Monaghan, Rosario Dawson and Michael Chiklis. (2008)

THURSDAY
Hannah's Law, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Premiere. A female bounty hunter goes in search of the outlaws who killed her parents, assisted by a young Wyatt Earp. Western, with Sara Canning and John Pyper-Ferguson. (2012)

FRIDAY
Music and Lyrics, ITV, 10.40pm
A washed-up pop idol seeks the help of the woman who looks after his plants to write a song for a teenage music star. Romantic comedy, starring Hugh Grant, Drew Barrymore, Brad Garret and Kristen Johnston. (2007)

Series proves it still has a winning formula

While The X Factor may appear to be on borrowed time, some people are saying the show's creator Simon Cowell is losing his golden touch.

And the likes of Red or Black? and Grease Is the Word were hardly as successful at his Idol, X Factor and Got Talent franchise, were they?

Nevertheless, the latter of that smash-hit TV trio continues to go from strength to strength.

It has now spawned spin-offs in over 50 countries and the British incarnation still looks just as fresh and exciting as it did when it made its debut back in 2007.

Tonight, the curtain falls on the ninth series of the talent search, and it has been one of the best so far, with a plethora of rough showbiz diamonds taking their chance to sparkle.

As well as the usual deluded talentless performers being given their 15 (well two) minutes of fame, and providing Ant and Dec with priceless comedy material, over the last eight weeks viewers have witnessed some remarkable acts taking to the stage.

Among those who have beat the buzzer and got the magic four yeses were a group of dads dancing to hip-hop music, a contortionist from Essex, a Russian trampoline artist, a burlesque dance troupe from Hull, and a comedy hypnotist with a pet dog.

Although these acts have added variety, it seems most of the major contenders for the prize of £250,000 and the chance to perform at this year's Royal Variety Show will once again be singers and dancers.

Crooner Calum Scott, who was the beneficiary of Cowell's Golden Buzzer, and Siberian shadow dance sensations UDI were the front runners with the bookies before last week's semi-finals got underway.

They were closely followed by Revelation Avenue, choir Cor Glennaethwy, operatic singer Emma Jones and five-piece London dance act Boyband. However, don't be surprised if there's an upset tonight.

After all, Scottish singer Susan Boyle was a massive odds-on favourite back in 2009, and ended up losing out to dance group Diversity.

Boyle has proved to be somewhat of an anomaly in the show, as she's arguably the only runner-up who has managed to carve out a lucrative post-BGT career.

So with the success of this series, will the awesome foursome of Cowell, Amanda Holden, David Walliams and Alesha Dixon be back for the show's 10th-anniversary run next year?

There have been rumours that Walliams may be about to quit the panel, but in a recent interview with Radio Times, the comedian seems quite happy with his role, and was still reveling in the fact that he was voted the public's Favourite Judge at the National Television Awards in February.

Nevertheless, despite Walliams' NTA award and the struggles of the X Factor, the show's creator Cowell is in no doubt who is still the main man.

"Mine is the opinion people want to hear," he boasts.

"It's annoying but true," Walliams adds.

And with the ongoing success of BGT, who can argue?



Ant and Dec host Britain's Got Talent Final, Sunday, ITV, 7.30pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Man Down
Channel 4, 10pm
Greg Davies' wonderfully silly sitcom returns for a new series. The last time we saw his alter ego, Dan, he was coming to terms with his father's death in a well-received Christmas special that managed to raise a smile while providing a tribute to the man who played the crazy patriarch, Rik Mayall. Despite his absence from the series, Mayall continues to loom large, as Dan spends much of this run attempting to step from out of his dad's shadow and finally grow up – a task which is far easier said than done for a fortysomething with the mental age younger than that of the children he teaches. Meanwhile, his friends Jo and Brian are otherwise occupied with mysterious projects of their own.

TUESDAY
The Syndicate
BBC1, 9pm
New series. The return of Kay Mellor's drama, this time following the staff at a Scarborough manor house whose numbers come up on the lottery - making them instantly richer than the family they serve upstairs! It's all hands on deck at Hazlewood Manor in preparation for the annual shoot, although with the Lord's health failing and debts rising, the

workers are struggling to keep up appearances on a shoestring budget. The future of the house might be in jeopardy, but gardener Godfrey isn't too worried – he has been working on his lottery formula for years and he thinks he has finally cracked it.

The Secret Life of Your House
ITV, 9pm
Viewers may need a strong stomach for this documentary in which George McGavin infests a house with thousands of animals normally thought of as pests in an experiment designed to give an insight into the ecology that exists under people's noses. After introducing creatures such as spiders, mice and cockroaches to the property, George, who even sleeps between bug-infested sheets for the night, lets them loose for a month to find out what they get up to.

WEDNESDAY
Long Lost Family
ITV, 9pm
Hankies at the ready – Davina McCall and Nicky Campbell are back with the most tear-jerking show on the telly, as they reunite more people with long-lost loved ones. Among tonight's lucky and

emotional beneficiaries are Susan and Chris, who were childhood sweethearts in 1962 when they discovered they were expecting their first child. Too young to care for the baby themselves, their parents stepped in and arranged for their son to be adopted. Now, having just celebrated their 50th

wedding anniversary, they are hoping to find him. Meanwhile, in Poole, Dorset, former soldier Paul Wright reveals how he was forced to leave his girlfriend and baby daughter in West Germany when he was posted back to the UK in 1985. Eventually losing touch with his family, he now wants to meet up with his daughter and explain the reasons for his decision.

THURSDAY
Dementiaville
Channel 4, 9pm
It's been predicted that in the future, one in three people in the UK will be affected by dementia. Yet despite this, it remains a complex disease with no known cure. This new three-part series aims to offer an

insight into the illness by exploring the idea of memory, and also looking at how different people deal with it. The first edition visits Poppy Lodge, a care home which takes a controversial approach to dementia. As the condition frequently destroys recent memories while leaving some older ones in tact, the staff have decided that rather than trying to bring the residents back to reality, they will instead help them embrace their own perceptions by recreating moments from their past.

FRIDAY
Holy Grail Conspiracy: Secrets of the Knights Templar
Channel 5, 8pm
This fascinating series, which explores some of the events depicted in the Bible and tries to work out whether they could really have happened, concludes with an insight into one of the most secret societies ever formed – the Knights Templar. Hugely powerful during the Middle Ages, it is said to have owned the Holy Grail, know Christ's bloodline, have discovered the New World a century before Columbus and carried out numerous good works while promoting religious faith. But, as this programme reveals, after falling foul of France's King Philip IV in the 14th century, the Templars were declared to be devil-worshippers and shunned.

Man Down, Monday, Channel 4, 10pm

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VISA

BRAIN GYM

No.327

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.

12	2	15	26	10	7	19	20	10	26
15	26	6	16		14	4	11		11
11		15	7	22	7	6	7	20	19
26	3	7	20			13	15		26
	4			13	20	21	1	15	25
3	19	7	2	2	5		15	9	26
1		24		17	1	10		1	8
6		1	2	19	21	2	18	7	3
10	12	20	19	26	2	7	7		26
15		15		14			9	26	15
26	15	15	23	25	18	10	25	18	4
11		7		15	20		20	1	11
9	20	3	9	7	10	19	4	6	22

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

D	I	O	Y	W	K	M	G	S	U	R	E	T
Z	H	A	F	J	X	C	V	N	P	Q	L	B

1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

- Be in no hurry and waddle around (6)
- To reveal hesitation spells downfall (6)
- Telephone for legal aid? (4,3,6)
- It's obvious I'd enter the contest (7)
- Put oil on an eel that has been prepared (5)
- A trap set outside a second time (5)
- New lamps put into service (5)
- Game many take to (5)
- One illness after another (7)
- A tree leaning over a ramp, perhaps (8,5)
- Stop in a crooked side street (6)
- Fresh petals set out on the table (6)

Down

- Clipped at the quayside (6)
- They support the game, perhaps (7,6)
- Turner writes articles (5)
- Not the sort of water-pipes common in most houses (7)
- It's thick-skinned, colourless and unwanted (5,8)
- Staggered, but got in line (6)
- He's around at the preliminary races (5)
- Examples of the more subtle type of humour that is found in clubs (7)
- Fighting together and all about to die (6)
- There may be a catch in it (5)
- People mending pipes? (6)
- Part of a jacket to copy in a fifty-fifty arrangement (5)

1	2	3		4	5	6	7
				8			
9							
10					11		
	12		13		14		
15				16			17
18				19	20		
21							
22					23		

Quick Clues:

Across

- Smoother (6)
- Boon (6)
- Arrogance (13)
- Tackle (7)
- Follow (5)
- Move quickly (5)
- Composition (5)
- Scope (5)
- Three-pronged spear (7)
- Uneasiness (13)
- Stable (6)
- Health (6)

Down

- Trifling (6)
- Calm (13)
- Extensive (5)
- Replies (7)
- Exaggeration (13)
- Rota (6)
- Dwelling (5)
- Went to bed (7)
- Fondle (6)
- Vapour (5)
- Figurine (6)
- Outcome (5)

Sudoku

	1		3	5			8	
		9			8			7
7						4	5	
	2	3		6		5		1
		6	7					
5				8		9	4	
	8	2						3
9			8			1		
	6	5		7	9		2	

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

5	7	6	2	1	8	4	3	9
2	9	8	6	4	3	1	5	7
1	4	3	9	7	5	6	2	8
9	2	1	8	6	4	5	7	3
6	8	5	3	2	7	9	1	4
4	3	7	5	9	1	2	6	8
7	5	2	4	3	6	8	9	1
3	6	9	1	8	2	7	4	5
8	1	4	7	5	9	3	6	2

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS: CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Candlesticks; 7 Ember; 8 Plain; 9 Tug; 10 Leastwise; 11 Garage; 12 Relief; 15 Treatment; 17 Air; 18 Earth; 19 Out; 21 Prophet of woe. Down: 1 Come together; 2 Lob; 3 Stream; 4 Impatient; 5 Khaki; 6 Interference; 7 Eager; 10 Lightship; 13 Inane; 14 Become; 16 Error; 20 Too. QUICK - Across: 1 Make the grade; 7 Light; 8 Grain; 9 Inn; 10 Virulence; 11 Ground; 12 Orders; 15 Austriat; 17 Pen; 18 Learn; 19 Early; 21 Invertebrate. Down: 1 Marriageable; 2 Tag; 3 Entire; 4 Regularly; 5 Drain; 6 Unreasonable; 7 Lento; 10 Vengeance; 13 Empty; 14 Direct; 16 Stain; 20 Rub.

Quiz

- What is acrophobia?
- Who played Hannibal Lecter in The Silence of the Lambs?
- Who was the Roman God of wine?
- Which composer's last words were reputedly 'I shall hear in heaven'?
- Who was the arch rival of Dan Dare?

- What is the symbol of the element sodium?
- What is the capital of the Canadian province of British Columbia?
- In what year was the QEII launched?
- Which Old Testament book comes between Joshua and Ruth?
- In which U.S. city is Logan airport?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 45; 2 Chile; 3 Cauliflower; 4 Jubilee;

5 Lundy; 6 Forest of Arden; 7 Arno; 8 Bob

Dylan; 9 Toto; 10 Mars.

Niner: POLYNESIA

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

5637
4128
199

gives a bird,
gives an animal,
gives another animal.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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Three-bedroom house is close to Warley Woods



A semi-detached residence in Wheatley Road, Oldbury, is close to Warley Woods.

With gas central heating and double glazing it is for sale through Derek Spires at £167,950. It has a porch, an entrance hall, a spacious lounge, a kitchen/breakfast room with an integrated dishwasher, a four-burner gas hob with extractor hood over and integrated oven and grill, a breakfast bar, utility, conservatory, first-floor landing, three bedrooms, a bathroom and a garden with shed. Contact Derek Spires on 0121 4204646 or visit www.derekspiresandco.com



Spacious home has a gallery and conservatory



THIS distinctive detached family residence in Rookery Road, Wolverhampton, includes impressive accommodation including a stylish kitchen and an elegant living room and dining room.

With ample off road parking, it is for sale through Skitts Estate Agents at £325,000.

It has a living room with feature fire-place and sliding patio door to a conservatory, dining room and a kitchen with a range oven with an eight ring gas hob and stainless steel cooker hood. There is a galleried landing, three excellent bedrooms, bathroom with a white suite including floor and wall tiling and a chrome heated towel rail. The rear garden has a patio and brick utility room.

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HALESOWEN, Longmoor Road£850 pcm+Fees
An immaculate & wonderfully presented 3 bed Mockow style semi-detached property featuring 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, lovely laid out private rear garden, 2 double bedrooms, 1 extended single bedroom, modern bathroom with shower, garage, driveway parking for 2/3 vehicles, gas central heating & double glazed. Ideally located for Huntingtree and Lutter Primary School. EPC: TBC



BIRMINGHAM, Orion Building£800 pcm+Fees
A fantastic opportunity to rent a fully furnished apartment in the heart of Birmingham City Centre. This 1 bed modern property overlooking the Mailbox features open plan living with 24 hour concierge service and secure underground parking (permit required), double glazed and electric heating. Viewings highly recommended. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Hagley Road£795 pcm+Fees
An unfurnished detached house within close proximity of Halesowen. Briefly comprising of: 3 bedrooms, large lounge, fitted kitchen, bathroom with separate w.c., driveway parking & garage, double glazing, gas central heating (new boiler) EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Ashville Drive£750 pcm+Fees
An unfurnished detached house, in a popular area, briefly comprising of: gas central heating, 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen, downstairs w.c., 3 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, front & rear gardens, garage & driveway parking, within easy reach of Halesowen College & town centre, available early June. EPC: TBC



STOURBRIDGE, Trinity Road£750 pcm+Fees
A beautifully fully refurbished detached house in this very popular location in a quiet cul-de-sac position comprising of: brand new kitchen leading to a very spacious lounge overlooking a full width conservatory, 3 spacious bedrooms & a fabulous appointed bathroom with shower, integrated garage, driveway for 2 cars, low maintenance garden. Available now. EPC: TBC



KINGSWINFORD, Blenheim Road£695 pcm+Fees
Located within the sought after Crestwood Park development and the catchment area for Crestwood Secondary School. A superb modern semi-detached house, featuring 3 good size bedrooms, modern bathroom with shower, welcome reception hall, large attractive lounge through to a dining area, fitted kitchen, driveway and garage, front garden and a large rear garden. EPC: D



BRIERLEY HILL, Wychbury Road£675 pcm+Fees
Superb modern 3 bedroom semi-detached house comprising of: porch, entrance hall, refitted kitchen, lounge diner, conservatory, 3 bedrooms, house bathroom, tandem garage, driveway & delightful rear garden, this family home is situated in an enviable cul-de-sac position and offers a very long rental opportunity. Available Now. EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Hunnington Crescent£650 pcm+Fees
Beautifully presented and within walking distance to Halesowen Town Centre. This 3 bedroom townhouse features a fitted kitchen, large lounge with space for a dining area, house bathroom with shower, low maintenance rear garden, double glazing and gas central heating, driveway and garage. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Summerfield Avenue£650 pcm+Fees
Ideally located in Hurst Green, close to popular schools, motorway access and commutable to Birmingham. This lovely semi-detached home features 2 large bedrooms and a single bedroom, 2 spacious reception rooms, modern fitted kitchen, family bathroom with shower, front and rear gardens, driveway parking and garage. EPC: D



CRADLEY HEATH, Wallace Rise£575 pcm+Fees
A beautifully refurbished 3 bedroom and terraced house. This lovely home is situated on the Timberlee Estate and ideal for local schools and bus links. The house features 2 large & 1 single bedrooms, front reception room, brand new kitchen/dining area, new bathroom with shower, good size private rear garden, on road parking. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Holt Road £550 pcm+Fees
A nicely presented refurbished mid terraced home, close to local shops. Featuring 3 bedrooms, 2 reception rooms, fitted kitchen with oven/hob, downstairs bathroom with shower, double glazing, gas central heating, small rear gardens, on road parking. Available Now. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Princess Crescent£550 pcm+Fees
A very well presented 1st floor apartment available in this popular and convenient location in a corner cul-de-sac position, briefly comprising of a modern kitchen with appliances, good size lounge, 2 good size bedrooms, bathroom with shower, garage & parking for 2 vehicles. Available immediately. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Beaumont Road£550 pcm+Fees
Located minutes from Blackheath Town Centre this modern 2 bed semi house features, lounge, fitted kitchen, conservatory, bathroom with shower, driveway parking, rear garden. It also benefits from gas central heating and double glazing. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Olive Lane £550 pcm+Fees
A well presented and redecorated 3 bedroom end terrace house in a popular location close to bus links & schools. Featuring reception room, modern fitted kitchen/diner, 1 double bedroom & 2 singles, upstairs bathroom with shower. Also benefiting from large flat garden, double glazing and gas central heating. EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Hawne Court£525 pcm+Fees
Located in a quiet, desirable neighbourhood is this well kept ground floor apartment situated at the end of a peaceful cul-de-sac, offering a spacious living room, modern fitted kitchen with built-in appliances, 2 double bedrooms, gas central heating, bathroom with fitted shower, allocated parking space with garage. EPC: D



CRADLEY HEATH, King Street£475 pcm+Fees
Located in the heart of Old Hill. Ideally situated for local shops, buses and train links. A 1st floor modern apartment which comprises of 2 bedrooms, master bedroom with en-suite, fitted kitchen, spacious lounge, double glazing, electric heating, bathroom with shower, allocated parking space. EPC: C



KIDDERMINSTER, Bewdley Road£425 pcm+Fees
A ground floor flat close to town centre & hospital comprising of: large living room, large double bedroom, fitted kitchen With oven/hob, bathroom with shower, gas central heating, double glazing, small private garden. Available Now EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Belgrave Road£425 pcm+Fees
A large ground floor modern apartment within walking distance to Blackheath Town Centre and local buses. Featuring a spacious lounge, fitted kitchen with oven/hob, 1 double bedroom, newly fitted bathroom suite with shower. Gas central heating, small rear garden with private entrance. Available Now. EPC: TBC



KIDDERMINSTER, Silver Street£400 pcm+Fees
A self contained ground floor apartment close to Kidderminster Train Station featuring: double bedroom, large bathroom, open plan lounge/kitchen, allocated parking, double glazed and electric storage heating. EPC: C



HALESOWEN, Lyde Green £395 pcm+Fees
Located on the popular Homer Hill Estate in Halesowen is this unfurnished 2nd floor flat, comprising of: Living room/fitted kitchen, double bedroom, bathroom with shower, communal garden, garage, & residents parking. Available now. EPC: E



LYE, High Street £375 pcm+Fees
Fully refurbished in the centre of Lye. This spacious 2nd floor apartment features a lovely lounge, 1 double bedroom, bathroom, modern and contemporary kitchen/diner, electric heating, double glazing, on road parking. Available now. EPC: E

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Sinatra The Man and his Music at the London Palladium

Two days departing September 5



PRICE FROM **£139.⁹⁵**

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- Visits to Mostar, Split and Trogir
- Visit to Krka National Park
- Services of a tour manager
- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)



Cheap and cheerful brand

By Graham Breeze

The motor industry is starting to take serious notice of the Dacia brand and the Sandero Stepway is one of the reasons.

Like many motoring writers I had my doubts about the longevity of the cheap and cheerful brand backed by Renault. But Dacia has given the Sandero an overhaul which opens doors to buyers wanting to take a step into the SUV market.

And that step comes at a price which is well within most buyers' range. You certainly don't need deep pockets with the Sandero Stepway Laureate dCi 90 on test, hitting the road at only £10,995. Extras pushed the price up to £11,675 though the base model is only £8,300.

The Stepway is a great-value alternative thanks to SUV looks that are achieved by a raised suspension and good looking body cladding.

The Romanian manufacturer has really upped the game, with even the entry-level Ambiance model getting electric front windows, chrome interior detailing, MP3 connectivity, stability control, ABS and a gear-shift indicator.

The top-spec Laureate benefits from big-car technology such as a touch-screen multimedia system, air conditioning, cruise control with speed limiter and satnav.

The model also comes with three rear head rests, height-adjustable driver's seat and steering reach, automatic door lock-

ing, ECO mode, a boot light, all-round electric windows, heated door mirrors, and a Media Nav touch-screen multi-media system.

There's a new chrome grille, front fog lights, graphite door handles, leather steering wheel and gear knob, cruise control, rear parking sensors and a seven-function computer giving average fuel consumption and speed along within information on your next service timing.

Options on this model also included leather upholstery, metallic paint, a spare wheel, European mapping upgrade and an extended five-year warranty.

Consumption

There was a touring pack of front arm-rest, boot luggage net, roof bars and front and rear mats.

Running costs will really attract interest, Dacia claim fuel figures of 70.6mpg from the 1.5-litre model on the combined cycle and I managed to achieve close to that over a week's driving - in fact I was beginning to wonder if the gauge was stuck.

CO2 emissions are only 105g/km on the model tested and with a top speed of 104mph and 0-62mph in 11.8 seconds this Dacia is no slouch.

The Stepway is the most comfortable Dacia I have driven, with no complaints from passengers about the usual hard seats or space, though it's a tight fit for three in the back.

Boot space is impressive and easily passed the golf club test.



'Dacia still offers you the cheapest way to get behind the wheel of a new car.'

Fold the seats down and Dacia fits the Sandero Stepway with a choice of two engines.

On both the Ambiance and Laureate models buyers can choose from a 0.9-litre turbocharged TCe petrol engine, or a 1.5-litre diesel unit, both sourced from parent company Renault.

The Sandero is not the best drive in class though.

The steering is heavy at low speed and doesn't offer too much response when cornering at speed either.

Dacia still offers you the cheapest way to get behind the wheel of a new car but there will still be the worry of residual values for prospective buyers to consider.

The Sandero Stepway is a crossover at supermini prices and with its raised height is probably the company's best looker.

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Infiniti Q70 exclusivity and value are a big attraction

By James Parker

Bristling with advanced technology and packing quite a punch from its 2.2-litre diesel and 3.7-litre V6 petrol engines, the Infiniti Q70 means business in the executive car market. The brand isn't exactly looming large on the radar of buyers but exclusivity and value for money can go a long way.

The rear-wheel-drive Infiniti Q70 is powered either by a 320PS 3.7-litre V6 petrol engine in M37 guise, or by a 170PS 2.2-litre diesel which boasts 400Nm of torque to rival the class best.

Modes

There's also a 364PS petrol hybrid version. A 7-speed Adaptive Shift Control gearbox takes care of gear swapping duties and includes further driver assistance in the shape of DRM Downshift Rev Matching which blips the throttle on down changes and a Drive Sport mode which brings the wheel-mounted paddle shifters into the equation.

The Q70 is fitted with Infiniti Drive, a system by which drivers can alter the set-up of the car between four modes.

There are Standard, Eco, Sport and Snow settings which adjust the throttle sensitivity, the transmission mapping, the level of ESP stability control intervention and the 4WAS 4-Wheel Active Steering system.

There's also a BSI Blind Spot Intervention system which uses radar to detect when there's a vehicle in the blind spot, warn the driver and intervene if the car is steered in that direction. BSI can actually brake selected wheels to create a yaw effect and move the car back into its lane away from danger.

The need to offer something different from the established German alternatives is not lost on Infiniti and as well as a host of technological features, the Q70 showcases the brand's distinctive styling themes.

Executive

The curvy lines and sportscar design cues aren't what we've come to expect in the executive car sector.

The rear has an element of Jaguar XF about it and elsewhere there are hints of Hyundai Coupe.

Underlying the bodywork is a layout that's clearly geared towards an involving driving experience.

The engine is at the front of the ladder-frame chassis but mounted behind the front axle to optimise weight distribution.

The suspension is a double wishbone set-up at the front with a multi-link system at the rear and a pair of anti-roll bars provide additional bracing.

The long wheelbase of the Q70 yields better cabin space than its swooping exterior lines would suggest.

There's also a luxurious air about the place with standard leather trim with a mix of aluminium and piano black detailing.

There's an analogue clock at the centre of the dash (an Infiniti trademark) and a large display screen above through which the various ancillary systems are controlled.

The major players at the top end of the executive car market have a habit of squeezing out newcomers but Infiniti is confident of getting a piece of the action with its Q70.

High technology and a sporting focus make the car an intriguing choice but it's the element of exclusivity that may appeal most to buyers who've grown tired of the usual suspects in this sector.

Brummies in victory over the Eagles

BIRMINGHAM speedway club fought back from four points down to claim a 47-42 victory over Eastbourne in the first leg of their Knockout Cup clash.

The opening seven races saw just one heat advantage registered which went the way of the Brummies in Heat Two to open up a narrow two point lead.

But two consecutive heat advantages for the Eagles saw the visitors move four points in front with nine heats gone.

The Brummies showed good character to turn the meeting around and finished off the night with four, 4-2's to secure the win on the night.

Team Manager Graham Drury had mixed emotions after the meeting.

Said Drury: "We ideally wanted a double figure lead from tonight's meeting and to only come away being five points in front is disappointing. I expected more, but this cup tie is far from over."

"But on the same hand it was a good spirited fightback and it was good to keep our unbeaten run going."

"As seems to be the case in every meeting, I thought Adam Ellis, Tom (Perry) and Zach (Wajtknecht) were all superb, but we had a long tail end tonight and it's something we need to look at."

Brummies 47: Zach Wajtknecht 15+1, Adam Ellis 15, Tom Perry 12, Alex Wilson 4+1, Adam Kirby 1, Harvie Banks 0, Sam Chapman R/R.

Eastbourne 42: Bradley Wilson-Dean 14+1, Georgie Wood 10+2, Marc Owen 6, Matt Bates 4+2, Kelsey Dugard 4+1, David Mason 4, Richard Andrews R/R.

George hold their spot in the division

Warwick & Worcester Premier Division 1

The George 231 Greville BC 182
THE George stayed in second place in the league after a top quality performance to see off rivals Greville by 49 shots.

The George eased into a 10-shot lead after the first four thanks mainly to Stewart Meddings 21-9 win backed up by Paul Hemming (21-16) and Phil Clinton (21-19).

The middle four put the match out of the reach of the Greville after Paul Greene's massive 21-2 win followed by wins from Jamie Dunn (21-11) and Pete Davenport (21-13) gave The George a commanding 44 shot lead. Wins in the back four by Mark Street (21-14), Elliot McGuinness (21-15) and Steve Dicken (21-20) completed what turned out to be a comfortable victory for The George.

Find extra push, says McDonald

KEVIN MCDONALD wants Wolves to find an extra 10 per cent to win promotion as he admitted next season is a big one for the club.

Wolves finished seventh after being squeezed out of the top six on goal difference on the final day by Ipswich, their total of 78 points the highest at Championship level to miss the play-offs.

Boss Kenny Jackett is determined to lead Wolves into the Premier League and McDonald, who was the club's only ever present in 2014-15, is convinced further improvement is within their capabilities.

"We know we can improve that extra 10 per cent and who knows where that could take us?" said the Scottish playmaker.

"It will be a hard league again but, with everything in that dressing room, we'll give it a good shot."

"We've come a long way and next season is a big year for us. This season has to be used as a motivation."

McDonald believes Wolves should be proud of how far they have come after being in League One when Jackett took over in June 2013. "When you look at where the club was two years ago, and to think we've finished seventh and missed out on the play-offs on goal difference, we'd have been more than happy with that," he said.

"We have to be proud of the work we've put in over the last couple of seasons."

McDonald believes Wolves will be better equipped to challenge next time after adjusting to the second tier. "We showed we can adapt our game to the Championship," he said. "When we went through a tough patch teams were trying to stop us playing and it was hard to adjust." McDonald struck up an effective link-up with Benik Afobe and the Scot is confident he can continue to create chances for the strikers.

"I enjoyed the season – I was pleased with how I played," said the midfielder.

"Producing assists is the main part of my game and, with the strikers we have, it's all about trying to play them in and giving them chances."

Team punished but forgiven by fans

Arsenal 4 Albion 1

THE volume at the Emirates Stadium told Albion's players that they were forgiven.

Tony Pulis' side were punished severely for failing to turn up for the final game of the season.

Yet loud appreciation from the travelling fans confirmed to Pulis' men that an off-day to end the campaign would not be held against them.

A combination of Arsenal's brilliance and Albion's last-day lethargy saw the visitors blown away by a first-half Arsenal whirlwind.

Theo Walcott grabbed a hat-trick before the break as Arsene Wenger's men turned on the style a week before facing Villa in the FA Cup final.

And Jack Wilshere capped a classy display with a brilliant goal to give the hosts a 4-0 half-time lead that could have been doubled had they converted all of their chances.

The Gunners eased off after the break, although Gareth McAuley's headed consolation never looked likely to trigger a Baggies comeback on a day when his side were heavily beaten.

It was not a day for recriminations, though, with 2,500 travelling supporters applauding their side from the field just six days after a very different display had earned a 3-0 win over champions Chelsea.

Memory

It was a day to wipe from the memory quickly but one which, in the greater scheme of things, did not matter one iota.

Arsenal pinned Albion inside their own half in the opening exchanges and they made a dream start when they went ahead on four minutes.

Joleon Lescott was dragged out of position and Walcott drifted into the Baggies' left-back area, received a pass and hammered a fantastic shot over Boaz Myhill and into the far, top corner.

It might have been 2-0 straight away, first when Alexis Sanchez bent a free-kick just over and then when the Chilean skipped gracefully into the Albion box before his shot deflected through to Myhill.

Saïdo Berahino blasted over the bar.

The Baggies pulled a goal back on 57 minutes. Chris Brunt delivered a corner from the right and McAuley leapt unmarked to head home.

Help take Wolves up, Afobe told



Benik Afobe ended the season as joint top goalscorer with Manchester City's Sergio Aguero

BENIK Afobe has been told to resist the Premier League for now – and give Wolves another season by "smashing it" in the Championship.

Afobe finished the season as the joint top scorer in the country with 32 goals in all competitions alongside Manchester City's £38m striker Sergio Aguero.

Former Wolves striker Nathan Blake has watched £2m Afobe in

action and believes the 22-year-old should give Kenny Jackett's side at least another 12 months to try to help the club return to the Premier League before making any decision on his future.

"If I was Benik I'd be thinking 'I've got 13 goals for Wolves from January to the end of the season and I can smash this Championship by getting another 25-plus next season and getting promo-

tion, then we'll see how the land lies'," said Blake.

"Then whatever happens, he will be in a win-win situation. And if he stays now and sets himself some targets then I think in a season or two, he'll be ready for the Premier League."

"They will do well to hold on to him." Afobe has been selected in Gareth Southgate's initial 27-man England Under-21 squad.

Bacuna looking for brotherly treble in cup

VILLA'S Leandro Bacuna is looking to complete an unlikely treble in this Saturday's FA Cup final.

The 23-year-old will hope to follow in the footsteps of his brothers, who have both tasted glory this season.

Younger brother Juninho helped FC Groningen win the KNVB Beker – the Dutch equivalent of the FA Cup – earlier this month.

Older brother Johnson then followed up with more success for Harkemase Boys in an amateur league title decider.

It means the pressure is on Leandro when Villa look to win their first FA Cup in 58 years against Arsenal.

"It is brilliant for my family at the moment," he said. "My little brother played the cup final in Holland. My bigger brother played in a final at amateur level and obviously we have the FA Cup final on Saturday."

Juninho played in the last few minutes of the final and I was really pleased for him.

"It was a great atmosphere. I was really happy for him because it was his first season in the first team so to win a cup was great – especially as I didn't get a cup while I was there."

Both brothers will be in the crowd at Wembley along with the rest of the family, where Leandro will be hoping to edge out Alan Hutton for a starting place at right-back.

"It is good to have that competition and have a good battle for your place," Bacuna added. "It is going well for me at the moment and I hope I can keep on playing a few more games until the season finishes."

Youngsters win final in extra time

A DRAMATIC penalty shootout victory saw Wolves Under-19s end the season in style by lifting the Bitzer Cup.

The Wolves youngsters defeated Mexican outfit Chivas Guadalajara 5-4 on spot-kicks in Germany, keeper Harry Burgoyne ending up the hero with a crucial save.

Jordan Graham, who was named player of the tournament, had earlier been on target as the game finished 1-1.

Wolves had reached the final without conceding, beating Red Star Belgrade 2-0 in the semi-finals thanks to a brace from Connor Ronan, Graham assisting in both. They overcame VfB Stuttgart and FC Zurich to top their group.

Wolves Under-15s were champions in Germany beating Essen in the final.

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Joint bosses now in place for Tividale

PHIL MALE and Ross Thorpe have been announced as the new joint-managers of Evo-Stik First Division South side Tividale.

The duo replace Ian Long, who left to join Alvechurch after last week's JW Hunt Cup victory over Stone Old Allynians at Molineux.

Male, aged 36, retired as a player at the end of the 2014/15 campaign at Sutton Coldfield Town and made several appearances for Tividale under Dean Whitehouse in the West Midlands League.

Thorpe, 33, saw his playing days ended at the age of 17 due to injury and has managed Alvechurch and Coleshill Town having become a qualified coach at the tender age of 21. He has also been assistant manager at Sutton Coldfield Town.

Tividale football general manager Leon Murray said "I'm pleased we've reached the conclusion of our managerial search because we need to start preparing for the 2015/16 season and pre-season isn't too far away now."

"Phil and Ross have experience of the Evo-Stik Division One South and that was a key ingredient during this process.

"We've a lot of hard work to get through in the next few weeks, particularly on the playing side to ensure we have a competitive side for the start of the season."

Dale's head of communications Steven Beech added: "I'm delighted to welcome both Phil and Ross to the club. We initially held discussions with them on Wednesday and we were very impressed with what they had to say.

"Phil requires no introduction having played here, and he's a local lad, too. He's extremely popular in these parts."

Benteke may be a nightmare for Gunners in final

ASHLEY Westwood says Arsenal's defenders will be having sleepless nights over Christian Benteke and Villa's fast-breaking midfielders in Saturday's FA Cup final.

Benteke scored 12 goals in the final 12 games of the season and midfielder Westwood agrees the 24-year-old Belgium striker has rediscovered the form which made him one of the country's most feared strikers.

And he predicts an uncomfortable time for the Gunners defence at Wembley – especially with the likes of Fabian Delph, Tom Cleverley and Jack Grealish bursting forward from midfield.

"I'm sure he does (have a fear factor)," said Westwood. "I think he's back to full fitness now – he was struggling with his Achilles early on and people didn't see that, they just expected him to walk back in and fire in the goals.

"But he's back to his best now, bullying defenders and I'm sure they'll have sleepless nights.

"Christian is a real handful for anyone."

Villa head into the game underdogs.

Legend backing Guzan to be FA hero

VILLA legend Nigel Spink has tipped Brad Guzan to stop Arsenal and become their FA Cup hero at Wembley.

Guzan is primed for a recall if recent first choice Shay Given fails to shake off a groin injury that made him unavailable for Sunday's 1-0 defeat to Burnley. Untried Jed Steer came in for the Premier League debut against the Claretts with Guzan on the bench.

Guzan, 30, has played all but the last three league games of the season for Villa, while 39-year-old Given has been preferred throughout the FA Cup run and the final three league outings.

Football

But Spink, who famously replaced Jimmy Rimmer 10 minutes into the 1982 European Cup final against Bayern Munich and helped lead Villa to their finest hour, is convinced Guzan is ready to return to the side.

"He's had a nice break now and it's been a chance to get his head straight and get focused and he will be ready for it, I'm sure," said the 56-year-old, who made 460 appearances for Villa from 1977 until 1996. "You've always got these possibilities because anything can happen, but

I'm sure if Brad Guzan comes in, he will do well.

"He's been the number one goalkeeper for a couple of years now and he will be absolutely fine."

Spink, who was at Villa Park on Sunday, was also impressed with 22-year-old Steer, who is cup-tied for the final after playing for Yeovil in earlier rounds.

"I thought Jed did really well considering his lack of first-team football," said Spink. He must have been a bit nervous coming into the team – it was a pressure game for him, but he looked confident. He has shown I'm what he can do in the future if he's needed."

CLUB DELIGHTS IN DOUBLE WIN

IT was double delight for Halesowen at the weekend with both the first and second teams securing victories.

After winning the toss and putting lowly Brewwood into bat in humid, overcast conditions the Halesowen seam attack tore into the opposition reducing them to 20-5 with Eddie Rhodes 4-17 being the highlight.

The spin duo of Gabriel and Zain Shahid then wrapped up the tail with only James Lunn (30) offering any semblance of resistance. Brewwood were 98 all out in 42 overs.

In reply Halesowen lost a couple of early wickets with the returning Kester Moseley and Juhar Johal both falling cheaply but Ben Stebbings (51 no) steadied the ship, assisted by Tarryck Gabriel (29) and Halesowen ran out comfortable seven wicket winners.

Terrific

The second XI were involved in a terrific scrap at local rivals Old Hill who posted a very competitive 241-8 from their 50 overs after having been asked to bat first by Halesowen skipper Adam Hawker.

Omar Dawood (54) and Stephen King (42) provided the backbone of the Old Hill innings which was boosted by some fine hitting in the last five overs by Bilal Mohammed (28 no) and Jehangir Baig (19).

In response Halesowen got off to a solid start with opener Tom Williams posting a fine half century.

But the fall of his wicket for 53 quickly followed by Charlie Tromans, both to Baig, reduced Halesowen to 108-4 at the drinks interval and looking like they had it all to do. However, a fine stand between Rameez Khan (48) and Richard Cox (39) put Halesowen back on track until both fell in quick succession to leave Halesowen needing 42 to win off the last six overs with just four wickets in hand.

Halesowen keeper Joe Tromans (29 no) took up the challenge and assisted by Chris Jones (10 no) steered the visitors within sight of victory.

A massive six from Jones off the last ball of the penultimate over set up Tromans.

Mulumbu wants to battle Albion



Mulumbu holds off Jonas Gutierrez during his final outing for Albion – at Newcastle this month

Released Albion midfielder Youssouf Mulumbu wants to make a quick return to The Hawthorns next season – with the opposition. The 28-year-old, who has spent six seasons with the Baggies, is hopeful of joining another Premier League side for the 2015/16 campaign.

Mulumbu became a firm fans' favourite during his time in the Midlands, making 211 appearances and scoring 15 goals.

He said: "Now I have a new challenge. I don't know where I'm going but I hope to stay in the UK. I wish West Bromwich Albion all the best. I hope to play against them next season, in my house, against my fans."

Mulumbu, who began his career at Paris St

Germain, was released on Sunday as part of a summer shake-up by manager Tony Pulis.

But the player insists he will always have a soft spot for the club.

He said: "This club is more special to me than Paris. PSG was the academy for me, where I became a professional.

"But this club gave me everything, they gave me the opportunity to play at the highest level. People know me now because I played for West Brom. I thank them for that."

"I came here, in my opinion, as a good player but now I leave as a good Premier League player."

"And I will never forget my time here."

Training call surprise for, Albion's Tyler

ALBION wonderkid Tyler Roberts has revealed his surprise and delight after winning a call-up to train with the Wales senior squad next month.

The 16-year-old forward is one of four players joining Chris Coleman's initial 28-man party for the Euro 2016 Group B qualifier against Belgium on Friday, June 12 at Cardiff City Stadium from June 1.

The training call completes a double milestone for the hot prospect, who was included in Albion's senior squad for the first time in Sunday's 4-1 defeat at Arsenal.

Gloucester-born Roberts, who qualifies through his Welsh grandparents and joins fellow 'extras' Harry Wilson, Declan John and Gethin Jones in the training camp, was thrilled to be rubbing shoulders with Gareth Bale and Co.

"It was unexpected to be called up for the training camp so soon. It came as a surprise," said Roberts.

"It's a great honour, I was with my grandad when the news was announced and he's very proud as he is who I get my Welsh heritage from. He's really happy and excited for me, it's good to make him proud."

"The whole family is proud and that's good for me because ultimately that's what I want to be doing."

"It will be a great experience being around the full squad and around those kind of players, hopefully I'll learn a lot from them."

Roberts was an unused substitute at the Emirates Stadium alongside fellow Baggies teenager and academy prospect Alex Palmer.

The youngster relished the experience of being in and around established first-teamers.

"It was an amazing experience," he said.

Team will crank it up, says Spink

NIGEL SPINK has tipped Villa to turn it on in the FA Cup final after claiming they probably took things easy against Burnley.

Villa go into Saturday's showdown against Arsenal as huge underdogs.

Preparations for Tim Sherwood's side haven't gone as smoothly as they would have wanted.

But legend Spink, who made 460 appearances in goal for Villa, is convinced they will show a massive improvement in the final.

"I wouldn't be surprised if they had got one eye on the final because they didn't want to get injured," said Spink.

★★★

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